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# **I.**

## **RARE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE**



## I.

### RARE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE.

HE necessarily limited space at our disposal for the treatment of a subject at once so interesting and important as the rare manuscripts of the Bible, admonishes us to waive all needless introductory remarks, and proceed at once to the matter in hand. Our readers will hardly need to be reminded that the word manuscript (usually written MS., or, in the plural, MSS.,) signifies *written by the hand* (from the Latin *manus*, the hand; and *scribo*, *scriptum*, to write); or that, before the invention of printing, all books were produced in this form; each *copy* of any work being laboriously built up, letter by letter, by men who were called *scribes* (writers); or that the books so written were called *scriptures* (writings), and that, therefore, the inspired books were called, *par excellence*, the Scriptures; or, as the Greek name is, the *Hagio-grapha*, or Holy Writings. Less familiar than with these things may some be with the materials employed by the old scribes; with

the form of their writings when complete; with the most ancient MSS. that have been preserved from the ravages of time, the torch of the incendiary, and the bigot zeal of ignorant fanatics; and with the text by which the date of a MS. may be approximately ascertained.

1. The cheapness and perfection of our writing materials present a striking contrast to the cost and rudeness of those of primitive times; while the invention of printing renders it less needful than formerly that the material should be of so durable a nature, since more accurate copies can be indefinitely multiplied at a price that often appears to be ridiculously small. In the very remote times, tables of wood or stone, called *caudices*, or *codices*, were used. Hence the term *codex* came to be employed for a MS. on any substance. Such tables were frequently used for *legal* purposes where durability was of consequence, and hence a system of laws was called a *code*. The common material on which we are now writing—*paper*—reminds us by its name of one of the most ancient substances known,—a preparation of the *papyrus*, or *paper-reed* (the *papyrus nilotica*). The thin, concentric coats, surrounding the triangular *stock* of this plant, were cut into strips, and placed

side by side on a table. To prevent splitting, another layer was then pasted crosswise, so as to form a sheet of convenient thickness, which, after being pressed and dried in the sun, was polished with a shell or some other smooth substance. A number of these sheets, about twenty in general, were glued together to form a scapus or roll, and such a *roll*, of whatever material, was called by the Romans a *volumen*, whence our word volume. The *breadth* of the roll was determined by the length of the strips, and was usually from ten to fifteen inches. The *length* might be carried to any extent; some have been found as long as thirty feet. Many of these *papyri*, as rolls of this material are called, are still to be met with in various museums. One in the Vatican is dated, according to Champollion, B.C. 640. Others, said to be of the age of Darius, are in the collections of Paris and Turin. A book made of sheets of papyrus sewed together was brought some years ago from Egypt by Dr. Hogg, and is now in the British Museum. The MS. is a copy, in Greek, of part of the Book of Psalms. Herodotus (v. 58) calls the papyrus *biblos*, from the Egyptian name of the plant, and hence, probably, the Greek name *biblion* for book—whence our word Bible, *the book*—has been derived. Although



the papyrus continued to be used in Italy till about the twelfth century, other materials came into use long before that time. At best the papyrus was but brittle, and not therefore so serviceable for documents that were subject to frequent handling. For such writings—the Sacred Scriptures, for example—some substance with a tougher texture was required. This desideratum was met by the employment of the prepared skins of various animals, now known under the general name of *parchment*. It is said that parchment (of which the finer sort, made of the skins of very young calves, is called vellum) was invented by Eumenes II., King of Pergamos (B.C. 197—159), in consequence of the prohibition of the export of papyrus from Egypt by Ptolemy Epiphanes. This may be true of parchment proper, but Herodotus (who was born B.C. 484) mentions writing on skins as common in his time; and Ctlesias (B.C. 398) describes the ancient Persian records as written on leather. The word Pergamena is supposed by some to prove its invention at Pergamos, where, probably, it was improved and largely manufactured, but the word itself was not in use until many years after Eumenes, its supposed inventor, died. According to Mabillon, it first occurs in the writings of Tatto, a monk of

the fourth century, before whose time the usual term was *membrana*, the word we find in the Greek Testament (2 Tim. iv. 13). Parchment was necessarily an expensive material ; hence, and because of its increasing scarcity as writers multiplied, because also the ancient parchment was better than that which was afterwards made when each writer prepared his own, it was not an uncommon thing for parchment upon which the characters had grown dim with age, or had been partially obliterated by artificial means, to be afterwards used for other writings. Such MSS. are called *codices rescripti*, or *palimpsests* (from the Greek *palimpsestos*, rubbed a second time ; from *palin*, again ; and *psēn*, to rub away) ; and the labours of the learned have brought to light many remains of biblical and classical literature which had thus been compelled to make room for monkish legends and other equally worthless productions. The ink was made, it is asserted, of lamp-black dissolved in gall juice, or sometimes in gall and in vitriol ; and it was applied with a pointed reed (Jer. xxxvii. 18 ; 2 Cor. iii. 3 ; 2 John 12 ; 3 John 13), the characters being painted rather than written, since ancient writing in *uncial* or capital letters had not the fine strokes of modern writing. When the material to be written upon

was hard, a pointed *stylus* (whence our word *style*), sometimes of iron, was used (Job xix. 24 ; Psalm xiv. 1 ; Isa. viii. 1 ; Jer. viii. 8).

2. Let us now glance at some of the most ancient MSS. of the Bible that have come down to us. The principal original languages of Scripture were Hebrew, for the Old Testament ; and Greek, for the New. Of the more ancient Hebrew MSS. none have survived to our times. But since a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek, called the Septuagint (of which something will be said in a subsequent paper), was made about B.C. 300, and was the version usually quoted by our Lord and the Apostles, we may regard it as a faithful rendering of the old original Hebrew. We are further warranted in relying upon its general fidelity by the fact that it does not differ in essentials from the oldest existing Hebrew MSS., which themselves are transcripts of the still more ancient Hebrew writings. In the value of the completed work, in proportion to its exactness, in the rigid rules that governed the copyists, and in the sense of awful responsibility with which a Jewish scribe pursued his work of transcribing the word of God, we have ample guarantees for the general authenticity of the sacred text. " Indeed,

the substantial agreement of the MSS. of Scripture is—the number of transcriptions they have passed through being taken into account—one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of literature, and almost irresistibly suggest the idea of a superintending providence.” Some of the most ancient of existing Hebrew MSS. belong to the Bible Society of Odessa. But the oldest known in the world is at St. Petersburg, whither it was brought from Derbend in Daghestan. It is a pentateuch roll on leather ; and, since the subscription states that it was *corrected* in the year A.D. 580, it must have been *written* some time before, and can hardly be less than 1,300 years old. Of Hebrew MSS., of various ages, there are vast numbers in existence. Thus Dr. Kennicott collated 630 for his critical edition of the Hebrew Bible ; and De Rossi collated 734 more. How great an advantage, therefore, has the Holy Scriptures over the classical writings of the Greeks and Romans ! Of them, about ten or twenty MSS. are considered sufficient to form an accurate text. In very few instances can they be dated so near to the time of their authors, as in the case of the copies of the writings of prophets and apostles. Thus, of Herodotus only fifteen MSS. are known, and of these

none belong to a period more remote than the tenth century ; yet no one doubts that we have a correct text of the old historian. The Greek MSS., containing the New Testament and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, are of much greater antiquity. These also are very numerous, while some, for their great age, deserve special mention even in this brief paper.—Until very recently the Vatican MS. (*Codex Vaticanus*) was believed to be the oldest in existence. It is the first that came into the possession of the learned of Europe. Whence the Vatican library originally obtained it is not now known, but it appears as No. 1209 in the first catalogue of the library, which was compiled in 1475. Such was the special value attached to this one MS., that to it alone has been given habitually the name it bears, as if it were *the one* distinctive treasure amongst the thousands of MS. volumes in the pontifical library, called by De Wette, while walking through its wondrous galleries, “a magnificent mausoleum for dead books.” This MS. includes both the Old and the New Testaments. Of the *New* it now contains the four Gospels, the Acts, the seven General Epistles, nine of St. Paul’s Epistles, and that to the Hebrews as far as chap. ix., ver. 14. All that follows this place

is lost. The text is written in three columns to a page. It is believed to have been written in Egypt between A.D. 300 and 400. (Though Alford—see his Greek Testament, *Prolegomena*—says, “the latter end of the fifth, or the sixth century.”) For a long time the Roman court seldom granted access to it; but in 1828 Cardinal Angelo Mai undertook an edition of it by command of Leo XII. This edition appeared in 1857, and was found to be full of mistakes. Tischendorf corrected Mai’s New Testament, in several hundred passages, in his *Novum Testamentum Vaticanum*, published in 1867. Since then other corrections have been supplied in the *fac-simile* edition of 1868, by Vercellone and Cozza, also inserted in the *Appendix Novi Testamenti Vaticani*, 1869.—Next to the Vatican MS., the Alexandrian MS. (Codex Alexandrinus) was considered, till recently, the most important. This MS., now in four volumes, small folio (sometimes called quarto), was presented in 1628, by Cyrillus Lucaris, the patriarch of Constantinople, to Charles I. of England; and is now in the British Museum. It receives its name from Alexandria; whence Lucaris obtained it. It is written in two columns to a page, on thin vellum. The New Testament is imperfect, Matt. i. to xxv. 6;

John vi. 50 to viii. 52 ; and 2 Cor. iv. 13 to xii. 6, being lost. It has the two epistles of Clement of Rome ("which in it alone have descended to posterity"), an epistle of Athanasius, and a production by Eusebius on the Psalter. It is believed to have been written about the middle of the fifth century. It is very much dilapidated, the ink of the letters having eaten through the vellum, in consequence of which it would be extremely difficult to photograph effectively. Still an edition, in types imitating the original, page for page, and line for line, has been published (Woide, London, 1768), and Mr. B. Harris Cowper published an octavo edition, in ordinary type, in 1860.—The claims of these two famous MSS. have been recently rivalled, if not eclipsed, by that of the celebrated Sinaitic MS. (*Codex Sinaiticus*). This was discovered in the year 1844, by Dr. Tischendorf, at the convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. He first found a portion of the Septuagint in a basket of supposed rubbish destined for the flames. The monks willingly gave him this, thinking it of no value ; but on their learning from him the probable antiquity of the writing, they declined to let him have the rest. The portion he had obtained he then took to Berlin, and published

under the name of the *Codex-Friderico-Augustanus*, declaring that he had seen much more of the same document. After an unavailing attempt to obtain the remainder in 1853, he visited the monastery again in 1859, when, being under the protection of the Emperor of Russia, he obtained permission to copy it at Cairo. Afterwards, things were so managed, that the original work was handed over to the Emperor Alexander. This MS., containing much of the Old and the whole of the New Testament, with the exception of one leaf, is written with sometimes two and sometimes four columns to a page. To the New Testament are appended the epistle of Barnabas, and part of the Shepherd of Hermas, which, so late as the beginning of the fourth century, were reckoned canonical by many. All scholars of eminence are now agreed that this codex was written about the middle of the fourth century. At the cost of the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia, a splendid edition of this MS., by Tischendorf, was printed in 1863, page for page and line for line, with types cast to imitate the letters of the original. Copies of this edition were presented by the emperor to most of the considerable European libraries. Some are of opinion that this famous codex formed one of the fifty copies



of the Bible which in A.D. 331 were ordered by the Emperor Constantine to be executed in Constantinople, under the superintendence of Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian. Should this surmise be correct, probably the Emperor Justinian, who founded the convent at Sinai, sent it from Constantinople as a present to the monks of St. Catherine.—Among the most valuable of ancient writings is the Parisian MS. (*Codex Regius*) now in the imperial library at Paris. Unfortunately it is only a series of considerable fragments. It is of the kind called palimpsest, some of the Greek works of Ephrem the Syrian (whence it is sometimes called the *Codex Ephremi*) having been written over the ancient writing. It appears to have at one time included the Septuagint version of the Old, and the New Testament. Cardinal Ridolfi, of Florence, was its former owner. It was probably written in Egypt about A.D. 450.—The Cambridge MS. was presented by Beza (whence it is sometimes called the *Codex Bezae*) to the library of the University of Cambridge in 1581. It contains the Gospels and the Acts, but with many omissions (as, for example, Matt. vi. 20 to ix. 2; John i. 16 to iii. 26, xviii. 13 to xx. 13; Acts viii. 29 to x. 14, and xxii. 29 to the end). It is believed to have been written

at the close of the fifth, or at the commencement of the sixth century.—Besides these and some other very ancient and rare codices, the number of MSS. is immense: “upwards of 500 MSS. of the Gospels, ranging in date from the tenth to the sixteenth century, have been inspected, more or less cursorily; more than 200 contain the Acts and catholic Epistles; upwards of 300 the Pauline Epistles, and 100 have the Apocalypse” (Davidson, *Bibl. Crit.* ii. 324).

3. The tests by which the antiquity of a MS. is decided are various, intricate, and scarcely—all of them—appreciable by a general reader. Some of them we may be content with specifying, and some others we may more fully explain. Suppose a MS. of unknown date to come under critical inspection: (1) The quality and appearance of the vellum would be one of the first things to be examined. The most ancient and valuable parchment was prepared from the skin of the antelope or the ass. The aid of the microscope would therefore be called in to decide this point. The quality of the parchment would be a further test. The oldest in appearance is not necessarily the most ancient. About the eleventh century the quality deteriorated, hence a dirty-coloured parchment is

evidence of the want of antiquity. This may possibly arise from the circumstance, that writers of this time prepared their own parchment, and *they* were doubtless less skilful as manufacturers. A curious passage from a sermon of Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours (born in 1054), proves and illustrates this fact. The sermon (xv. Paris folio, 1708) is on the "Book of Life," which he exhorts his hearers to obtain. "Do you know what a writer does? He first cleanses his parchment from the grease, and takes off the principal part of the dirt; he then entirely rubs off the hair and fibres with pumice-stone; if he did not do so, the letters written upon it would not be good, nor would they last long. He then rules lines, that the writing may be straight. All these things you ought to do, if you wish to possess the book which I have been displaying to you." (2) The number of the columns on the open leaf would be noted. This marks the transition from the old *volumes*, or *rolled* books. (3) The form of the characters, and the absence of large letters at the beginning of sentences, would be carefully examined before the writing itself were relegated to the style of a given age. The most ancient MSS. are written in what are termed uncial letters, that is, square or capital letters, and all of

one size. The words are not separated, and there is an absence of punctuation. In later times it became the custom to begin sentences with larger, and sometimes with what are called illuminated capitals. (4) The presence, as in the case of the Codex Sinaiticus, of the works of Barnabas and Hermas, would be regarded as indicating a MS. of the early period when the canon of Scripture had not been settled. (5) If the examiners observed corrections by different hands in different ages, in different styles, and of various shades of ink, these would be minutely scrutinized, and certain inferences would be deduced therefrom by qualified palæographers. (6) Various readings often furnish a most important clue to the age of a MS. Let us give an example or two. (a) The usual conclusion of the Gospel of St. Mark (xvi. 9—21) is found in more than 500 Greek MSS., in all Syriac and Coptic MSS., in nearly all the Latin, and in the Gothic version. But Eusebius and Jerome say expressly that in nearly all the correct copies of their time, St. Mark's Gospel ends with the eighth verse of the last chapter, and were without verses 9—21. With these famous MSS. of Eusebius, who died A.D. 340, there agree—among all extant Greek MSS.—only the Sinaitic and the Vatican. They

therefore must, in all probability, be referred to the period of which he speaks. (b) In the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians we read, "To the saints which are at Ephesus;" but Marcion (A.D. 130—140) did not find the words, "at Ephesus," in his copy. The same is true of Origen (A.D. 185—254); and Basil the Great, who died A.D. 379, affirmed that these words were wanting in all *old* copies. And this omission accords very well with the encyclical or general character of this epistle. At the present day our ancient Greek MSS., and all ancient versions, contain the words "at Ephesus." Now, only the Vatican and the Sinaitic correspond with the *old* copies of Basil, and those of Origen and Marcion.

We cannot conclude this paper, on the MSS. of the Bible, in words more forcible and appropriate than those of one of the greatest critics of the sacred text. Dr. Bentley says, "The real text of the sacred writer does not now (since the originals have been so long lost) lie in any single manuscript or edition, but is dispersed in them all. It is competently exact indeed, even in the worst manuscript now extant; nor is one single article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them."

## **II.**

### **ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.**



## II.

### *ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.*

HE word *version* (from the Latin *verto*, *versum*, to turn) denotes the transferring of some written composition from one language to another; and is now chiefly applied to the various translations of the sacred Scriptures. At the present time there are very few important languages into which the Word of God has not been either altogether, or in great part, translated. "The Book and its Story," or the *Reports* of the "British and Foreign Bible Society," will show the wonderful extent to which this has been done: and a very interesting volume, entitled "The Bible of Every Land," will furnish the Bible student with a history of the Holy Scriptures in nearly every language and dialect into which translations have been made, illustrated by specimens in native characters. In this paper it is our intention to present our readers with a brief and condensed account of some of the *most ancient* of these translations.



1. Pre-eminent amongst these, both because of its antiquity and its importance, stands the SEPTUAGINT; or, the translation of the *seventy* (and therefore, in Biblical works, usually written *seventy* in Roman numerals, thus, LXX.). It seems to have derived its title, not as Eichhorn supposes, from the approval of the Alexandrian Sanhedrim of *seventy*, or *seventy-two*; but from the general belief, at one time, in a letter of Aristeas, in which he describes the work of *seventy-two* learned men who came from Jerusalem to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. The purport and history of this letter, which Josephus has transcribed (*Antiquities* xii. 2, 4), are as follows: Aristeas, who was an officer of the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, addressing his brother Philocrates, states, in this so-called letter, that the king—at the instigation of his librarian, Demetrius Phalerus—sent an embassy to Jerusalem, to request a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures; and that *seventy-two* persons might accompany it, six from each tribe, skilled in the Hebrew and Greek languages, by whose aid a translation might be made into the latter tongue. Philo, a learned Jew, adds to this letter some notes of his own, in which he asserts that the translators were placed in the island of

Pharos, each by himself, and made so many separate translations, and that these most miraculously agreed, word for word, with each other. Irenæus (iii. 24) relates the same story. Justin Martyr adds that he was taken to see the cells in which the interpreters worked. Epiphanius, however asserts that the translators were divided into pairs, in thirty-six cells, each pair being provided with two scribes, and that thirty-six versions, agreeing in every point, were produced by the gift of the Holy Spirit. While St. Augustine agrees with the inspiration of the translators, St. Jerome courageously throws aside the entire account of both the cells and the inspiration. Such is the story—together with a few of the opinions upon it—which in all probability gave to this ancient Greek version the title of *Septuagint*. Probably the more genuine account is that given by Aristobulus (*cir.* B.C. 200), who says, "It is manifest that Plato has followed our law, and studied diligently all its particulars. For, before Demetrius Phalerus, a translation had been made by others, of the history of the Hebrews going forth out of Egypt, and of all that happened to them, and of the conquest of the land, and of the exposition of the whole law. Hence it is manifest that the aforesaid

philosopher borrowed many things ; for he was very learned, as was Pythagoras, who also transferred many of our doctrines into his system. But the *entire* translation of our whole law was made in the time of the king named Philadelphus, a man of greater zeal, under the direction of Demetrius Phalerus." "This," says Mr. W. A. Wright, "probably expresses the belief which prevailed in the second century before Christ ; viz., that some portions of the Jewish history had been published in Greek before Demetrius, but that in his time, and under his directions, the whole law was translated: and this agrees with the story of Aristeas." After a most careful examination of the whole history, it is now currently believed by those who are best qualified to judge, that, during the reign of Ptolemy Lagus, Demetrius Philareus proposed the fitness, in a literary point of view, of a translation of the Jewish Scriptures ; that the work then commenced was carried on at intervals, and was finally completed in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (successor of Ptolemy Lagus) about the year 285 B.C. The moving cause which gave birth to this version is thus explained by the last-quoted writer : "It is well known that after the Jews returned from the captivity of Babylon, having lost, in great measure,

the familiar knowledge of the ancient Hebrew, the readings from the books of Moses, in the synagogues of Palestine, were explained to them in the Chaldaic tongue, in Targums or paraphrases [these will be explained in a subsequent paper of this series]; and the same was done with the books of the prophets, when at a later time they also were read in the synagogues. The Jews of Alexandria had probably still less knowledge of Hebrew; their familiar language was Alexandrian Greek. They had settled in Alexandria in large numbers soon after the time of Alexander, and under the early Ptolemies. They would naturally follow the same practice as their brethren in Palestine; the law first, and afterwards the prophets would be explained in Greek, and from this practice would arise in time an entire Greek version. All the phenomena of the version seem to confirm this view; the Pentateuch is the best part of the version; the other books are more defective, betraying probably the increasing degeneracy of the Hebrew MSS., and the decay of Hebrew learning with the lapse of time." Whether it was a purely literary purpose, as suggested above, or whether it was the necessity of a people who had lost, in great measure, the Hebrew, and adopted the Greek tongue, that origi-

nated the LXX., it is instructive to observe how the providence of God overruled heathen curiosity or Hebrew exigencies for giving to the world the old Hebrew Scriptures in that language in which the Gospel should first be preached. When the Apostles preached Jesus and the resurrection, and supported their arguments by quotations from the writings of Moses and the prophets, their hearers were able, like those of Berea, to "search the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Whatever its inaccuracies, the LXX. must have very materially aided in the establishment of Christianity amongst the peoples of the Gentile world. It was the version that was publicly read wherever Greek was spoken. With the exception of Origen and Jerome, the early Fathers of the Church were ignorant of Hebrew; they therefore used this version; and from it all the early translations were made, the Syriac alone excepted. In the form of the vulgate, the Church of Rome still reads it, and to this day it is the version in common use in the Greek and the greater number of the Oriental churches.

2. The language spoken by the people of northern Syria and Mesopotamia, and, after the captivity, by the inhabitants of Galilee also, was the *Syriac*, or western Aramaic. So close is the resemblance

between this tongue and the Chaldee, or eastern Aramaic, that Chaldee, written in Syrian characters, and without the point, is good Syriac, with the exception only of one inflection of the verbs. The two dialects differ mainly in the matter of the vowel points, and in the use of a different character. Into this ancient Syriac language several translations of the Old Testament were made at a very early date. Of these, two are regarded as pre-eminent among the Syriac versions. (1) The PESCHITO, or *literal* version (from a Syrian word signifying *simple*, or *literal*), is so called on account of its close adherence to the text, without the admixture of any allegorical interpretations. This "Old Syriac version" is one of the most ancient and valuable translations of the Bible. Various traditions ascribe it to the age of Solomon (who is said, by the Syrians themselves, to have had it made for the use of Hiram, king of Tyre), or to Asa, a Samaritan priest; while the New Testament, so it is asserted, was translated by Thaddeus and other apostles, in the time of Agbarus, king of Syria. Ephrem the Syrian referred to it in the middle of the fourth century as being then generally known and used, and therefore it must have been in existence a considerable time before. The majority of

modern critics refer its date to the first century. Michaelis, whose opinion on this point is usually followed, ascribed the translation of both Testaments to the most flourishing period of the Syrian churches; namely, the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. The New Testament, which contains the four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles of St. Paul (including the Hebrews), the first of St. John, the first of St. Peter, and of St. James, is one of the best versions in any language; and is used as their standard by the churches of Syria and of the East. (2) The second of the principal Syriac versions is the SYRO-PHILOXENIAN version of the New Testament; and is named after Philoxenus (Bishop of Hierapolis, in the province of Aleppo, 488-518), under whose auspices it was translated by Polycarp from the *Greek* text. It was subsequently (A.D. 616) revised by Thomas of Heraclea (whence it is sometimes called the *Heracleian* version), but is considered very inferior to the Peshito. To the Bible student, this version is the more interesting from the fact that it was the common language of Palestine in the time of our Lord.

In addition to these famous ancient versions—the LXX. and the Syriac—three others may be

briefly mentioned. The *version of Aquila* (A.D. 128), who was first a heathen, and then a Christian, and finally a Jew; and who, making his Greek translation to oblige the Jews, rendered the original so literally that Jerome was wont to say it was a good dictionary to give the exact meaning of Hebrew words. The *version of Theodotion* (A.D. 160), which is said to have been intended for an amended issue of the LXX., is less literal than the version of Aquila, and less free than the *version of Symmachus* (A.D. 200), which gives the sense rather than the words of the original, and was thought to excel in purity of Greek expression. Of the *Samaritan version*, it must suffice to say that it is a literal translation of the Hebræo-Samaritan text, into the Samaritan dialect, and that it was made considerably before the Christian era.

3. The history of the *Latin Vulgate* is both interesting and instructive. About the year A.D. 382, Jerome, a Dalmatian presbyter at that time, undertook, at the request of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, a revision of an older *Latin* version, of which fragments are found in the works of the early Latin Fathers—such as Tertullian and Augustine. By whom that older Latin version was made no one knows. Its birthplace was, however, not



Italy, where at that time Greek was the ecclesiastical language, but the Roman province of northern Africa, in which Latin had become the vernacular tongue. As Jerome advanced in the Old Testament he noted the inaccuracy of the LXX., from which the old Latin version was drawn; and resolved to make an entirely new Latin translation from the original Hebrew. This work occupied twenty-one years, and received, from the language in which it was made, the name of the *Vulgate*—the Latin being a language that was *generally known* at that time. At length, after considerable opposition from those who favoured the LXX., from which it very greatly differed, it was approved by Gregory the Great, and became the authorized version of the Latin Church. In this version, the *Psalter*—because of its liturgical use—and many of the *Apocryphal books*—which Jerome excluded, but which the Romish Church still holds to be canonical—continued in the old Latin. In consequence of this the text fell into confusion.

Somewhat analogous to this, in our day, is the confusion occasioned by the retention, in the “Book of Common Prayer,” of a translation of the Psalms older than that contained in the authorized version of the Bible.

Many attempts were made to restore it,—by Alcuin (at the instance of Charlemagne); by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury; by Cardinal Nicholas, and others; but little was really effected. At length a commission, appointed by the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545), pronounced that the text was so corrupt that only the pope could correct the evil; the Council, however, declared the Vulgate to be authentic, and ordered that a new edition should be undertaken. While the commission, which, by the way, Paul III. superseded, was about this work, the doctors of Louvain issued a new edition. This was prohibited by Paul IV., who promised that he would publish an authentic text. At length Sextus V. (A.D. 1590) issued the promised edition, with a preface by himself, in which he extolled its accuracy in the highest terms. Being infallible, he was, of course, competent to pronounce in this emphatic way. So many errors, however, were soon detected in this edition, that another, differing very materially from its predecessor, was speedily issued: in its turn guaranteed by the infallible authority of Gregory XIV. and Clement VIII. But this also disclosed so many blemishes to the keen eye of textual criticism, that Clement himself presently published a third edition

(in A.D. 1593), containing many fresh corrections. All subsequent editions of the *Vulgate* are transcripts of this, which is regarded as the standard edition of the Romish Church. For a long time it was not regarded as a source of criticism, but since the times of Mill and Bentley "its claims have been admitted as a witness to ancient readings, and, should a critical revision of it ever be accomplished, the gain to Biblical literature will be very great."

4. We pass away from these celebrated versions to another, which, if less important, is full of historical interest. Soon after the Visi-Goths were permitted by the Emperor Valens (*cir.* A.D. 375) to settle in Moesia (whence they obtained the name of Mœso-Goths), they were converted to Christianity. Their second bishop was Ulphilas, and he it was who achieved the work of translating the Bible into the *Gothic* language. It is believed that he also invented the characters in which the translation was originally written. These are formed, with very slight alterations, from the capitals of the Greek and Latin alphabets. It was not till towards the close of the sixteenth century that this version became known, by the discovery of a MS. in the library of the Abbey of Werden, in Westphalia. Subsequently, after the capture of Prague,

by the Swedes (1648), the celebrated **CODEx ARGENTIUS** was brought to light in that city. This MS. of the four Gospels, on purple vellum, in *silver* letters (whence its name *Argentius*, from the Latin *argentum*—silver) is now preserved in the library of the University of Upsal, in Sweden. This copy is judged to be nearly as ancient as the time of Ulphilas, or at least not more than a century or two later. Palimpsest fragments of this *Gothic version*, though not in the silver character, have since been found in other places. One, containing part of the epistle to the Romans, was discovered at Wolfenbuttel, and since then other fragments, containing small portions of Esdras and Nehemiah, part of 25th, 26th, and 27th chapters of St. Matthew, of St. Paul's epistles to the Philippians, Titus, and Philemon ; and of a homily and calendar, were discovered in separate leaves in the Ambrosian library at Milan. Although this version does not rank very high as a source of criticism, the *English* Bible student cannot but regard it with interest, since the old Gothic tongue in which it is written is the very fountain-head of our own Anglo-Saxon language.

Although these ancient versions are the most important, they are by no means all that were

made at a very early date. Space forbids that we should give anything like a detailed account of any one of these. A brief summary of the principal is all that we can attempt. The *Æthiopic version*, in the Gheez, or ancient sacred tongue of the country, was made, it is believed, in the fourth century. About the same time several *Egyptian versions* were made—*e.g.* the Coptic, or Memphitic, the dialect of Lower Egypt; the Sahidic, or Thebaic, in the language of Upper Egypt; and the Bashmurić, a mixture of the other two. About the fifth century, two scholars were sent from Armenia to Alexandria to acquire a knowledge of Greek, and so the whole Bible was translated from that language, and what are termed the *Armenian versions* were obtained. A version called the *Georgian*, was made about the sixth century in the Armenian character. The *Persian version* was made also at a very early period (*cir.* A.D. 800). And the *Arabic versions*, of which there are several, date, some of them, as far back as the tenth century.

The student will do well to remember that these versions were made from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, and Greek of the New; and that they are connecting links between the

original MSS. and modern translations. Done at different times, by different hands, in various languages; they all were obtained, through different channels, from one original source. Long after some of the oldest were made—the LXX. for example—the Old Hebrew MSS., or accepted copies of them, were in existence, and were repeatedly collated for purposes of minute correction. Thus on the margin of the oldest MSS., such as the Sinaitic Codex, numerous emendations are inserted. He will do well also to bear in mind that translations in one language—as the Vatican, the Alexandrian, and the Sinaitic—made at different times, by different persons, so nearly resemble each other—the various readings being of no vital consequence—as to leave not the slightest doubt of their being all obtained from authentic sources. So clear is this, that if, from these ancient versions, a copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew, and of the New in Greek, were composed; such a result would be found almost to literally coincide with the original documents, could they be brought to light. In other words, the discovery, were it possible, of the original MSS. of all the inspired writers from Moses to John, would not, in any material point, affect the authenticity of those

numerous versions of the Holy Scriptures, now existing in almost every language, as a proof of the human consciousness of the need of a Divine revelation ; of the acceptance of this one Book by the reason and conscience of universal man ; and, above all, of the all-wise and merciful providence of God, who, in the events of history, has made so wondrous a provision for the conservation and diffusion of the Word of Life and Salvation.



### **III.**

#### **CELEBRATED COMMENTARIES ON THE BIBLE.**





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#### *CELEBRATED COMMENTARIES ON THE BIBLE.*

**B**Y the word commentary—from the Latin *commentus*, a thought, a reflection—is generally meant an exposition of the words and truths contained in the sacred writings. Very great is the number of commentaries, both upon the whole Bible, and upon each of the books composing the canon of Scripture. Very varied, also, are the characteristic features of many of the works that bear this general title. Hence we have critical, philological, grammatical, practical, expository, devotional commentaries. Commentaries in which many of these features are combined. Some that are rather exhibitions of learned pedantry, than of intelligent piety: huge compilations of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, overshadowing the light of truth, darkening the counsel of God with a great cloud of words without knowledge. Some that exhibit another phase of human weakness, and illustrate the

strength of that imaginative faculty which discovers in the Word of God what in truth was never there: expositions of a class to which that must have belonged, of which its owner—a simple-minded Christian woman—said, that she thought she could understand the sacred text, and was not quite without hope that one of these days she would be able to understand the explanation. Our present business is not so much to speak of commentaries in the general, nor yet of modern ones in particular, as it is to bring under the notice of the Bible student some writings of the commentary genus that are not so universally known. Some of the most curious and, to the scholar, the most useful commentaries on the Scriptures are of Jewish origin. And although, in all likelihood, few of our readers may have access to them, they will have often met with their titles in theological works, and will naturally desire to know what such writings as the *Talmud*, the *Targums*, and the *Masorah* are. To these let us first attend.

1. *The Targums.* When the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, and the “book of the law of Moses” was read to them by Ezra, the Levites “caused the people to understand the law; and the people stood in their place. So they read in

the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." While some are of opinion that the work of these Levites consisted in explaining to the people, many of whom had become very ignorant, what Ezra had read ; others maintain that Ezra read the law in pure Hebrew, while the Levites translated it, as he proceeded, into Chaldee, the vernacular dialect which the exiles spoke in Babylon. Whichever opinion be correct, we have here the first idea of a commentary. At first, and for some time, these explanations were merely oral. Delivered in the hearing of the Levites, they were handed down from generation to generation. In the course of time such explanations were committed to writing, and from their being not simple versions, but explanatory paraphrases, they were called by the Chaldee word *Targum*, which signifies "an explanation." Of these Targums there are at present ten in existence. (1) Of these, the most ancient is the Targum on the Pentateuch, called the *Targum of Onkelos*. This Onkelos is supposed to have lived at Babylon, and is made by the Babylonish Talmud to have been a contemporary of Gamaliel, at the very beginning of the Christian era ; certainly no critics place him lower than the second century.

More nearly than that of other Targums does his language approach to the pure Chaldea of Daniel and Ezra ; and so closely does he follow the Hebrew text that his work is rather a version than a paraphrase, while he is free from the fables which prevailed among the Jews at a later time.

(2) The Targum on the prophets, entitled the *Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, contains certain marks from which Jahn concludes that it was compiled, towards the close of the third century after Christ, from some other older paraphrases. Little indeed is known of its reputed author. The Talmud says of him—but the Talmud contains a multitude of equally wonderful and improbable stories—that “he was the greatest of the eighty disciples of Hillel, . . . and when he sat at work upon the law, every bird flying over him was burnt. He wrote a paraphrase of the prophets from the mouth of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Then was the land of Israel shaken three hundred parasangs. The Bathkol went forth and said, Who has revealed my secrets to the sons of men? Jonathan Ben Uzziel stood upon his feet and said, It is I who have revealed thy secrets to the sons of men,” etc.

(3) Another Targum on the Pentateuch, called the *Targum of the pseudo-Jonathan*, from its having

been erroneously ascribed to the last-named author, is far inferior to the Targum of Jonathan in purity of dialect, in its general style, and in its mode of expression. It moreover abounds in silly fables, and not only displays great ignorance of the Hebrew language, but from its mention of the Turks and Lombards it is evident that it could not have been written earlier than the seventh century. (4) Still another Targum on the Pentateuch is called the *Jerusalem Targum*, from the corrupt language in which it is written, and is probably a compilation from various authors made in the seventh or eighth century. It generally follows closely the pseudo-Jonathan, occasionally departing from it for the worse. The remaining six Targums scarcely demand specific mention. In order that our readers may more clearly understand the great difference between these ancient Jewish paraphrases we subjoin the following specimens, which we quote from the "*Introduction* to Notes, critical and practical, on the Book of Genesis," by Prof. Bush. They should be read by the side of our own authorised version.

*Targum of Onkelos* (Gen. i. 2), "And the earth was waste and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the abyss: and a wind from the Lord

breathed over the face of the waters." (Verse 20), "And the Lord said, Let the waters produce the creeping thing endowed with the principle of life, and fowl that may fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of heaven." (ii. 9), "And the Lord God caused to spring up from the earth every tree that was desirable to be seen, or good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of whose fruit they who eat are wise in discerning between good and evil." (iii. 15), "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy son and her son. He shall remember against thee what thou hast done to Him from the beginning, and thou shalt be observant of Him unto the end."

*Targum of pseudo-Jonathan* (Gen. i. 2), "But the earth was confusion and emptiness, destitute of the sons of men, and bare of all cattle; and darkness was upon the face of the abyss; and the spirit of mercies from before the Lord breathed over the surface of the water." (Verse 16), "And the Lord made the two great lights: and they were equal in their glory twenty and one years, subtracting from these six hundred and seventy parts of an hour. But after this, the moon brought a calumnious accusation against the sun, and she was made less:

and He appointed the sun, which was the greater light, to rule in the day, and the moon, which was the lesser light, to rule in the night: with the stars also." (Verse 27), "And the Lord created man in His own likeness: in the image of the Lord created He him, with two hundred and forty-eight members, and three hundred and sixty-five sinews, and clothed him with a skin, and filled him with flesh and blood: male and female in their body created He them."

*Jerusalem Targum* (Gen. iii. 9), "And the word of the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Behold, the world which I have created is laid open before Me: darkness and light are open before Me, and how didst thou expect the place, in the midst of which thou art, not to be discovered before Me? Where is the commandment which I enjoined thee?" (Verse 15), "And it shall be when the sons of the woman shall attend to the law, and perform the precepts thereof, they shall prepare to wound thee on thy head, and shall kill thee: but when the sons of the woman shall forsake the commandments of the law, and shall not perform the precepts thereof, thou shalt be in readiness, and shalt bite them upon their heel, and shalt afflict them with sickness. Nevertheless, there



shall be a remedy for the sons of the woman ; but for thee, O Serpent, there shall not be a remedy : for they shall provide a medicine for one another in the heel, in the end of the heel of days, in the days of King Messiah."

Prof. Bush also observes of the Targums, "They are undoubtedly the most ancient books, next to the Hebrew Scriptures, possessed by the Jewish nation ; and being exceedingly literal, they seem to vindicate the original text, as it has come down to us, from the charge of corruption by the Jews for the sake of evading the arguments of Christians. For the same reason they often afford the interpreter important aid in determining the signification of difficult words and phrases, although from the remoteness of their period from the age when the language was vernacular, their testimony cannot have the weight of that of direct and immediate witnesses. But they undoubtedly serve as a channel for conveying down to us the earliest traditionary sense put by the Jews upon many obscure passages of the sacred writings ; and correct information on this point is always exceedingly desirable. But it is in establishing the meaning of particular prophecies relative to the Messiah that these Targums are pre-eminently useful." Of this fact the follow-

ing may serve as an illustration : "Gen. xlix. 10, *Jacob* prophesieth that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh should come.* Christians understand this of the *Messiah*, and from thence prove against the *Jews* that the *Messiah* must, according to this prophecy of Him, have been long since come, because long since—that is, for many ages past—there hath been no regal power in *Judah*, no prince of that nation ruling with the sceptre over them ; nor any from between their feet—that is, any from that people—to make laws or administer justice among them : because for many ages past the whole *Jewish* policy hath utterly ceased from among them, and they have nowhere, since the time of *Jesus Christ*, the true *Messiah*, been governed by their own princes or their own laws ; but everywhere by strangers, and the laws of strangers, among whom they have lived. The *Jews*, to evade the force of this manifest argument against them, object first, that the word *Shebel*, in the *Hebrew* text, which we interpret a *sceptre*, the instrument of rule, signifieth also a *rod*, which is the instrument of chastisement, and therefore say that though this should be understood of the *Messiah*, the meaning would be no more than that their

chastisement—that is, the banishment which **they** now suffer in their dispersion among strange nations—should not cease (as they all reckon it will not) till their *Messiah* shall come to deliver them from it. But in the second place they object, that they do not allow that the *Messiah* is meant by the word *Shiloh* in this prophecy. But in both these particulars the *Chaldee* paraphrases are against them. For the words of *Onkelos* in this text are, *There shall not be taken away from Judah one having the principality, nor the scribe from the sons of the children, till the Messiah shall come.* And the *Ferusalem Targum* or paraphrase, and that called *Fonathan's*, agree with him in both these particulars; for they both interpret *Shebel* of the principality, and *Shiloh* of the *Messiah*, and therefore all three of them help the Christian cause in this matter. *Prideaux*' "Connection," Pt. ii., book viii.

2. *The Talmuds.* About A.D. 150, Rabbi Judah Hakkadosh (or the Holy) committed to writing various traditions explanatory of the Law of Moses. This compilation is called the *Mishnah* (i.e. the second), or oral law of the Jews. Upon this work a commentary exists, called the *Gemara* (i.e. completion or perfection). Of these commentaries there are two. One, compiled (about A.D. 300) by Rabbi

Jochanan, for forty years president of the academy in Palestine, is called the *Gemara of Jerusalem*; the other, entitled the *Gemara of Babylon*, was composed by Rabbi Asa, president of the School of Sora, near Babylon, some time in the fifth century. The Mishnah and Gemara united are called the *Talmud* (i.e. doctrine or learning). When accompanied by the Gemara of Jerusalem, the Mishnah is called the *Jerusalem Talmud*; when the Gemara of Babylon is subjoined, it is called the *Babylonian Talmud*. This latter is held by the Jews in the highest estimation. It was to some of the traditions afterwards compiled into the Mishnah that the "Pharisees and Scribes," in all probability, referred when they said to our Lord, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." And He answered by asking, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" Of the estimation in which these traditions (Latin *traditio*, from *trado*, I deliver, hand down, exactly agreeing with the original *παράδοσις*, from *παράδιδωμι*, I deliver, transmit) were held by the Jews, the following may serve as an example: "The words of the Scribes are lovely beyond the words of the law; for the words of the

law are weighty and light, but the words of the Scribes are all weighty." The Rabbins say, "The Biblical text is like water, and the Mishnah like wine." "The law is like salt, the Mishnah like pepper." Such extravagant praises of the oral traditions agree with the Saviour's words: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have delivered." Of these traditions the following may be taken as an example: "Abba Saul said, When I was an interrer of the dead, I had once to pursue after a gazelle; I entered into the hollow of a hip-bone of a dead man, and ran after it three miles, and yet I reached neither the gazelle nor the end of the hip-bone; when I turned back, they told me this bone belonged to Og, the king of Bashan. Abba Saul said, Once upon a time, when I had been interring the dead, a cave opened under me, and I found myself standing up to my nostrils in the socket of a dead man's eye; when I returned, they told me it was the eye of Absalom. Perhaps thou wouldst say, Abba Saul was a short man; Abba Saul was the tallest in his generation." (*Quoted by Dr. Davidson, in Kitto's Encyclopædia, art. Talmud.*) Notwithstanding many such ridiculous and improbable fictions, and their wild

superstitions, the Talmuds afford many happy elucidations of Scripture, especially relative to the manners and customs of the Jews.

This seems to be the proper place in which to insert a brief notice of the celebrated Jewish commentator, *Moses Maimonides*. This great luminary, the glory of Israel, the second Moses, the Reformer of Judaism, as he is called, was born at Cordova, March 30th, 1135. In consequence of a decree of the fanatic Caliph Almohades against the Jews, he was compelled to quit his native land (1148); and while yet a traveller in search of a home he began (1158) his stupendous *Commentary on the Mishna*, his knowledge of the Talmud being so great that he could dispense with the aid of books. This remarkable work, which was written in Arabic, was finished in ten years (1168), and entitled *The Book of Light*. The author now became the great oracle in all matters of religion, was appealed to (1175) by his countrymen for his opinion on difficulties connected with the law, and was nominated Rabbi of Raheia in 1177. In another ten years (1170—80) he completed his second great work, called *Fad Hachezaka*, i.e. the *Mighty Hand* (in allusion to Deut. xxxiv. 12). The fourteen books of which the work consists form a cyclopædia

of every branch of Biblical and Judaistic literature. "When it is added that Maimonides has given in every article a lucid abstract of the ancient traditional expositions of those who were regarded as the oracles in their respective departments, the immense importance of this remarkable production to the Biblical student can hardly be overrated" (*Dr. Ginsburg*). This "great luminary" was extinguished December 13, 1204. The Jews of Jerusalem proclaimed a day of public humiliation, reading publicly the threatenings of the law (*Deut. xxviii.*), and the history of the capture of the ark by the Philistines (*1 Sam. iv., etc.*); for they looked upon Maimonides as the ark containing the law. The profound regard the Jews still have for his memory is expressed by the well-known saying, "From Moses the lawgiver to Moses (Maimonides) no one hath arisen like Moses" (in allusion to *Deut. xxxiv. 10*).

3. In addition to the Targum and the Talmud, there is another ancient work, entitled the *Masorah*, a kind of grammatico-critical commentary on the Old Testament, which is exceedingly interesting, and not without its use. The *Masorah* (*i.e.* tradition) is a compilation of criticisms on the sacred text by a set of men called *Masters of the Masorah*,

or, as they are more usually termed, *Masorites*. It is very uncertain who they were, and where they pursued their work, and at what time. If the Jewish tradition may be relied upon, the work began with Moses; from him it was committed to the wise men till the times of Ezra and the great synagogue, and that subsequently the learned men at Tiberius committed it to writing, and called it the Masorah. The contents of this curious work embrace notes on the Hebrew consonants, on the vowel points, on the words, and on the verses. Thus, in respect of the *words*, the Masorites tell us how many times certain words occur at the beginning of a verse, and how many times other words occur at the end of a verse, and they laboured to fix the meaning of words whose sense had become ambiguous. In respect of the *verses*, we are told how many there are in each book of the Old Testament, which is the middle verse of each book, and in many cases the number of the letters. The *form* of the Masorah was at first a number of separate leaves or books. Subsequently they were added as marginal notes to the text. Some editions of the A.V. of the English Bible are printed with these notes, as, for example, *Bagster's "Comprehensive Bible."* The following illustration



of them, as applied to our English Bible, may be interesting to the young Bible student. The number of *books* in the O.T. is 39 ; in the N.T., 27 ; total, 66. Of *chapters* there are, in the O.T., 929 ; in the N.T., 260 ; total, 1,189. Of *verses* there are, in the O.T., 23,214 ; in the N.T., 7,959 ; total, 31,173. Of *words* the O.T. contains 592,493 ; and the N.T. contains 181,253 ; total, 773,746. Of *letters* in the O.T. there are 2,728,100 ; and in the N.T. there are 838,380 ; total, 3,566,480. [The Apocrypha contains 14 books, 183 chapters, 6,081 verses, and 125,185 words.] The *middle chapter* in the Bible, which is also the least, is Psalm cxvii. The *middle verse* is Psalm cxviii. 8. The *middle line* is 2 Chron. iv. 16. The word "and" occurs in the O.T. 35,535 times, and 10,684 in the N.T. ; total, 46,219 times. The word Jehovah occurs 6,855 times. Of the Old Testament, the *middle book* is Proverbs ; the *middle chapter* is Job xxix. ; the *middle verse* is 2 Chron. xx. 18 ; and the *shortest verse* is 1 Chron. i. 1. Of the New Testament the *middle book* is 2 Thess. ; the *middle chapter* is between Rom. xiii. and Rom. xiv. ; the *middle verse* is Acts xvii. 17 ; the *shortest verse*, which is also the shortest in the whole Bible, is John xi. 13. **Ezra vii. 21** contains all the letters in the alphabet.

Two chapters in the Bible are alike, namely, 2 Kings xix. and Isaiah xxxvii. In the Book of Esther, neither the word "God" nor "Lord" occurs. On the Masorah, Dr. Alexander observes : "Whilst there is much in it that can be regarded in no other light than as laborious trifling, it is far from deserving the scorn which has sometimes been poured upon it. There can be no doubt that it preserves to us much valuable traditional information concerning the constitution and meaning of the sacred text. It is the source whence materials for a critical revision of the O.T. text can now alone be derived."

Having thus described these famous Jewish commentaries, we will conclude this paper with a few words on modern Christian commentaries. Often, very often, have we been asked by young Bible students and others, "What commentary on the Bible do you recommend as the best?" A very puzzling question, and one to which, for obvious reasons, the same reply could not be given in each case. The work we might recommend to one might not be so well adapted to the *means* and *requirements* of another. One needs an exposition for family reading, another for private consultation ; one desiderates an exhaustive doctrinal

commentary, another is more curious to be informed on matters relating to Biblical science ; a third is prepared to enter upon a critical examination of the original languages, while a fourth requires something suggestive and homiletic. Elsewhere we have said that "we have long held that a perfect commentary on the whole Bible cannot be produced by any one pen. The very unequal value of the *parts*, where this has been attempted, sufficiently warrants this belief. Even those that aim less at the critical than at the devotional and practical exposition of the sacred writings, are not of equal merit throughout. The various languages in which the books of Scripture were originally composed ; the purposes for which they were written ; the subjects of which they treat ; and their other manifold characteristics, require for their apt elucidation specially constituted minds and appropriate mental tastes. Each book, too, has many sides : the historical, the scientific, the doctrinal, the devotional, the practical, often meet in the briefest treatise. Hence not only may all the resources of *one* mind be laid under contribution by one short book, but a combination of *minds*, peculiarly gifted, is often needed for its full and perfect explanation. Some are skilful in clear-

ng up verbal difficulties, others in identifying natural objects, or in tracing historical and scientific allusions, while the special forte of a third class is to deal with doctrinal matters. From all this it follows that, so far from any one man being fully competent to produce a perfect commentary on the entire Holy Scriptures, many men are needed fully to expound each individual book." The young Bible student should commence by procuring "*The Portable Commentary*," in two volumes, which he may obtain for a few shillings: adding to it, first, *Kitto*, and then, as opportunity may afford, and as the study of special books may suggest, the most approved works on the various sections or books of the Bible. In this way he may build up by degrees a library of Biblical literature far superior, for practical purposes, to the bulk of voluminous and expensive commentaries, though all of them were ranged in majestic order upon his shelves.

The existence of such an immense array of comments on Scripture proves not only how precious, but how inexhaustible are the thoughts of God to pious men; and though many commentators may be regarded as "worthy folks who too often write on books, as men with diamonds write on glass,

obscuring light with scratches," and of some others it may be said, —

“ How commentators each dark passage shun,  
And hold their farthing candle to the sun!”

the student will be thankful that so much learning and piety have been in all ages brought to the elucidation of those writings that we are commanded to search because they are able to make us wise unto salvation.

## **IV.**

### **FAMOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE**



#### IV.

### *FAMOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE.*

ONG before the appearance of the present authorized version of the Holy Scriptures many attempts were made at different times, and by different hands, to translate the Word of God into the language of the English people. Thoughtful men had, in very early times, conceived the notion that it would be a good thing, both for the sake of truth and righteousness, if those who were able to read had the thoughts of God before them in their own tongue. It seemed unreasonable that a revelation made in a dark age to an ignorant people in the vernacular dialect should, through ages more enlightened, remain concealed in the sepulchre of a dead language from those who most needed it. Surely if the Hebrews might be entrusted with God's Word in Hebrew, to the English might be as safely committed the same Word in plain Saxon. As reasonably might Evangelists and Apostles have



written their Gospels and Epistles in the Chinese language to men speaking Greek, as that men speaking English should have God's truth only in the languages of Palestine and Asia Minor and Italy;—languages with which even the learned were not too familiar. It seemed fit that if the Great Father of all had anything to say to His children it should be said, as it was at first, in words that His children could understand. To retain the Scriptures in their original tongues was like locking the bread of life in a strong casket, out of the reach of starving people. Very naturally also, in course of time, the people might think that there were certain good reasons why the Word should be kept from them. They might think that, either what professed to be a revelation from Heaven would not bear the test of an examination conducted on the principles of plain common sense, or that the assumptions of their spiritual guides, and the doctrines taught by them, would not bear comparison with the plain statements of Holy Scripture. Elaborate concealments provoke suspicion. Such suspicion would increase as men became more enlightened and inquiring. If the priests were true men, teaching truth, neither they nor their utterances could suffer from other men having

the opportunity of searching "the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so or no." If Apostles could endure this test, why not their so-called successors also? So many wise and good men thought in the olden time, and thinking thus, they resolved that the Word of God should be exhumed from the sepulchre of dead languages, and like the *Living Word* Himself, whom the common people heard so gladly, should go about doing good.

Of the earliest of these attempts, few, and those but fragmentary, accounts have come down to us. The first, of which we know anything certainly, dates back upwards of a thousand years. Although it is a mistake to suppose that the venerable Bede (who died A.D. 735) made a *complete* translation of the Bible into Saxon, it is certain that he translated portions of the Scriptures. No event of his life is better authenticated than that he was engaged upon the translation of the Gospel of St. John at the time of his death; notwithstanding, all the early writers are not agreed as to the extent to which he had proceeded with that work. The most common story is, that in his last hour he was engaged in dictating to one of his amanuenses the last verse of the twentieth chapter. "It is finished, master," said the scribe. "It is finished," replied the dying

saint; "lift up my head, let me sit in my cell, in the place where I have so often prayed; and now, glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;" and with these words his spirit fled. About the time that Bede was thus employed at Jarrow, in Durham, Bishop Aldhelm (A.D. 706) was engaged upon a translation of the Psalter into the Saxon, at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire. Archbishop Usher tells us that King Egbert (who reigned from A.D. 827—839) made a Saxon translation of the Evangelists; and that in his day one Mr. Robert Bower possessed the MS. But in the Cottonian library is a Latin MS. of the four Evangelists, written most exquisitely by Egbert himself, with a Saxon version added by Aldred, a priest. Egbert's son, Ethelwolf, did the illuminations, the capital letters, the picture of the cross, and the four Evangelists; and Bilfred, the anchoret, adorned it with gold and silver plates and precious stones. Alfred the Great also (who died A.D. 901) is said, by the old Ely chronicle, to have translated the entire Bible into Anglo-Saxon; but it is more likely that he finished only the Psalms and some other portions. Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, also translated several books of the Old Testament into the same language in the tenth century. At that

early day devout persons, and those chiefly of the upper classes, or of the priesthood—for such only had sufficient learning—seem to have employed themselves in rendering portions of the Scriptures into the language spoken in this country, when what we call Saxon was becoming what we now call English. It is believed that in this way, and by different hands, the whole of the Scriptures had been translated prior to the thirteenth century.

Having glanced at these Anglo-Saxon times, it is now of purely English translations that we have to speak.

1. John de Wiclif, Wicliff, or Wickliffe, as his name is variously spelled, “the Morning Star of the Reformation,” the “Gospel Doctor,” and greatest of all the “Reformers before the Reformation,” was born in the parish of Wicliffe, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, in 1324; and having studied at Oxford, he first emerged into public notice, in 1361, as the master of Balliol College, as the hall of that name was then called. Being instituted in the spring of that year to the rectory of Fylingham, in Lincolnshire, he resigned his mastership. It was in 1363 that he took his degree, and commenced reading those lectures in Oxford which first exhibit his anti-Romish views. Exchanging

in 1368 the rectory of Fylingham for the living of Ludgershall, in Bucks, he was, in 1374, promoted to a prebend in the diocese of Worcester, and at the same time presented to the parish of Lutterworth, of which he continued priest until his death, in 1384. His visit to Bruges—whither he had gone in 1374, as second in a commission to confer with the papal legate as to certain abuses on the part of the papacy complained of by the English parliament—seems to have had the effect of confirming his previous suspicions. Hence he is said to have soon afterwards styled the pope “Antichrist,” “the proud worldly priest of Rome, the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers” (cut-purses). In consequence of this plain speaking the papal authority was invoked against him, and Gregory VI. commanded, by several bulls addressed to sundry bishops and the University of Oxford, an inquiry into his doctrines. Wicliffe escaped the evident purpose of this inquest, and became henceforth a more thorough reformer. Now commenced his great work—“the great event of the fourteenth century”—of translating and circulating the Scriptures among the common people. In this work he was aided by a great following of poor preachers, who travelled from village to village, carrying copies

of portions of them. The age was hardly ripe for this undertaking, but so strong an impression did he make that the Lollards, as his disciples were called (though the term properly designated the members of a semi-monastic society formed in Antwerp about 1300), were to be found among all classes, in the cottage, the church, the castle, and the palace. So rapidly did his doctrine spread after his death, that a writer of that day has angrily recorded, that "a man could not meet two people on the road but one of them was a disciple of John Wicliffe." It will be remembered that this translation, which was derived from the Latin, was made before the invention of printing; indeed, to this day the New Testament is the only portion of it that has yet been committed to the press. Slowly produced by the pen of the copyist, the Bible was at this time a very costly book. In 1274 the cost of a complete copy was £30, while the pay of a labouring man was 1½d. a day. The difficulty of procuring a copy may be gathered from the circumstance that, in 1240, it cost only £25 to build two arches of London Bridge. It can be no wonder that ignorance and superstition so universally prevailed, and that these early translators and reformers had to encounter so many difficulties.

2. The next translation in antiquity to Wicliffe's is that of William Tyndale, who also led the van in *printing* any part of the Bible in English.\* It was while the doctrines of Wicliffe were yet remembered and circulated by the children of that generation that had heard the "Gospel Doctor" preach, and while the first printers were perfecting their art, and while by these means—at home and abroad—the way was being prepared by Providence, that William Tyndale was born in the year 1483, in Gloucestershire, and probably at North Nibley, in the hundred of Berkeley. From his earliest years he was brought up at Oxford as a scholar, where, as old Master Fox says of him, "By long continuance he grew up and increased, as well in the knowledge of tongues and other liberal arts as especially in the Scriptures, insomuch that he read privily to certain students and fellows in Magdalene

\* The first Bible, or book of any kind, ever printed from movable metal types was a Latin Bible, the "*Mazarin Bible*," in two volumes folio, containing 1282 pages, printed at Mentz by John Guttenburgh, between the years 1450 and 1455. Only eighteen copies are known to exist, viz., four on vellum and fourteen on paper. Two on vellum and ten on paper have found their way to this country. At the sale of the Duke of Sussex's library one of the paper copies brought £190, and in 1827 one of the vellum copies sold for £504.

College some parcel of divinity, instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures." About 1519 he removed from Cambridge (whither, "spying his time," he had gone from Oxford), to the residence of Sir John Walsh, the manor-house of Little Sudbury. It was here that, during one of his frequent discussions with the friars, one of the priests observed, "Well, we had better be without God's law than the pope's." This fired the spirit of Tyndale, who answered with righteous indignation, "I defy the pope and all his laws, and if God give me life, ere many years the ploughboys of England shall know more of the Scriptures than you do." A very memorable time was that. There were giants on the earth in those days. Taking the year 1520 as our stand-point, how many great men appear at different parts of the horizon. There is *Lefevre*, now at sixty-five, advancing the reforming work in France ; there is *Erasmus*, the scholar of Rotterdam, at the age of fifty-three, still at work with untired zeal, having four years before completed his edition of the Greek Testament, a copy of which, two years ago, Tyndale has seen at Oxford ; there is *Luther*, at the age of thirty-seven, exclaiming at the Diet of Worms, "I cannot retract, so help me God!" there is that wonderful scholar *Melancthon*,



standing, at the age of twenty-three, **by the side** of Luther ; there is *Zuinglius*, at the age of thirty-six, doing good service amid the valleys of Switzerland ; and there are the two Johns, *John Calvin* and *John Knox*, both mere lads as yet,—the one eleven, the other fifteen years of age—and both (in the buoyancy of their youth) happily unconscious of the stern part they will take in the world's politics a few years hence ; and by our side is the brave Englishman, William Tyndale, of the same age as Luther, putting on his harness, and wrestling with portly abbots and sturdy dogmatic priests by his friend's fireside down in Gloucestershire. Having spoken his mind thus freely, he soon found that he must leave the Stichcomb manor-house, yet resolved to carry out his design of placing the word of God within the reach of English ploughboys. At first he hoped to find a patron in Tonstal, Bishop of London, but was disappointed, and at length he “understood,” as he said, “not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare.” Tyndale therefore repaired to Hamburgh, where—and afterwards at various other places—he trans-

lated and printed by the year 1525 two editions—one in quarto, the other in octavo—of the New Testament. He commenced with the quarto, and had advanced with the printing to the tenth sheet, when his doings were discovered, and a full description of it was sent to England. Tyndale, hearing of this, commenced, and in an incredibly short time completed, the octavo edition, many copies of which found their way to England. When this *ruse* was at length detected by those who, at first were searching for the quarto copies, Tonsal, to suppress the book, bought up the whole impression, and had it burnt at St. Paul's Cross. The proceeds of the sale (the books were sold at three shillings and fourpence a copy,—a large sum in those days) enabled Tyndale to prepare new editions in various sizes up to the year 1536, when, having advanced in the Old Testament as far as the Pentateuch, he suffered death (by strangulation, his body being afterwards burned) for Christ's sake at Villefort, near Brussels. His last words, uttered with a loud voice, were, "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England." "Surely if ever the lines of England's choicest Christian poet were strictly applicable to any single man, every word by way of eminence belongs to William Tyndale.

“ . . . His blood was shed  
In confirmation of the noblest claim,  
*Our* claim to 'eed upon immortal truth,  
To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.  
Yet few remember him: he lived unknown  
Till persecution dragged him into fame,  
And chased him up to heav'n. His ashes flew—  
No marble tells us whither. With his name  
No bard embalms, and sanctifies his song;  
And history (so warm on meaner things)  
Is cold on this.' ”

Thus perished, at the age of fifty-three, that famous Englishman, William Tyndale, the translator of the first printed edition of the English Bible—a book which, beyond all things else, did most to overthrow the power of the pope in this country, and lay the foundation of the Protestant constitution of these realms.

3. Henry VIII. having, for various reasons, domestic and political, favoured the Protestant cause in England, and some of the clergy having remonstrated against Tyndale's translation, the king ordered that a new version should be made, and entrusted the execution of it to *Miles Coverdale*, afterwards bishop of Exeter. Coverdale, being ignorant of the original tongues, translated from

the Latin and German, five of which versions he is said to have used. His translation was printed at Zurich, about 1535, and dedicated to Henry VIII., by whom it was favourably received. The dedication is "Unto the Moost Victorious Prynce, and our Moost Gracyous Soveraygne Lorde, Kynge Henry the Eighth, Kynge of England and of France, Lorde of Ireland, etc., Defendour of the fayth, and under God the Chefe and Supreme Heade of the Church of Englande, etc.," (*subscribed*) "Your Grace's humble Subjecte and daylie Oratour, Miles Coverdale." The year following its publication, Thomas Cromwell, the king's vicar-general and vicegerent in ecclesiastical matters, enjoined that a copy of this translation should be laid in the choir of every parish church in England, for every one to read at his pleasure. It is hardly needful to remind our readers that Coverdale's was the first English Bible of which the whole was printed.

4. As Coverdale's Bible was issued a year before the martyrdom of Tyndale, so, a year after that event, namely, in 1537, another edition appeared, under the fictitious name of *Thomas Mathew*; hence this is commonly called "*Mathew's Bible*." Its real editor was one *John Rogers*, a student of

Cardinal College, who was engaged by the king's printers (Grafton and Whitchurch) to improve Coverdale's version. It was but a mere fusion of Tyndale's and Coverdale's versions, and "was what we should now call a 'bookseller's speculation,' by which it is evident there was a growing demand for English Bibles for public reading. Cranmer thought it a better version than its predecessors, and used his influence to back the importunity of the printers for Letters Patent making it the only authorized version. Only 1,500 copies were printed, and the price was fixed at a sum equivalent to about £7 'of our money.' (*Blunt.*)

5. In the year 1539, one *Richard Taverner*, also a student of Cardinal College, revised the 1st edition for the printers. From the name of the editor, this issue is usually termed "*Taverner's Bible.*" In the editor's preface there first appears the suggestion that a complete revision could only be effected by the combination of several learned men.

6. When *Mathew's Bible* appeared, 2,500 copies had been printed at Paris, by permission of Francis I., for the use of English Christians. These, by order of the Inquisition, were burned. It happened,

however, that a part of the impression was saved, and, with the type and the printers, was conveyed to England. This portion of the issue of *Mathew's Bible* was then published, in 1539, under the patronage of Cranmer. From its size it bears the name of the *Great Bible*; and, from the archbishop having prefixed a prologue to it, it is sometimes termed "*Cranmer's Bible*." The titlepage of this, the first authorized English Bible, is embellished by a wood engraving of remarkable beauty, generally supposed to be taken from a design by Hans Holbein, the principal division of which represents the king delivering copies of the book to Cranmer and Cromwell. Along with the injunction that this Bible should be placed in the churches,\* is the following "item": "You shall discourage no man privily or openly from reading or hearing the said Bible, but shall expressly provoke, stir, and exhort every person to read the same, as that which is the very lively word of God, that every Christian man is bound to embrace, believe, and follow, if he look to be saved; admonishing them, nevertheless, to avoid all contentious altercation therein, and to use

\* An engraving representing a copy of this Bible chained to a reading desk will be found in the *Pictorial History of England*, vol. ii. 714, and a splendid copy of the book itself is preserved in the British Museum.

an honest sobriety in the inquisition of the true sense of the same, and refer the explication of the obscure places to men of higher judgment in Scripture."

7. When the Marian persecution drove many of the prominent Protestants from England, some of them found refuge in Geneva. Here the chief of these refugees—including Coverdale, Gilly, Whittingham, Woodman, Sampson, Knox, and Cole—issued a new edition of the Bible, which was partly a new translation and partly a revision of former versions. Of this book—called, from the town of its nativity, the "*Genevan Bible*"—eighty-four editions were issued from 1560 to 1611, when King James's version was published; and even after that period it continued to be printed and circulated so late as 1644. This is the first in the English language distinguished by numerals and verses. Sometimes the "*Genevan Bible*" is called the "*Breeches Bible*," from the curious rendering of Gen. iii. 7: "They sewed figge-tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches."

8. When Elizabeth ascended the throne, a new edition of the Bible was needed for the parish churches, whence it had been excluded in the reign of Mary. Archbishop Parker, having received the

royal command to superintend this work, allotted distinct portions of the *Great Bible* to various men of learning, for the purpose of revision and correction. Since eight of these divines were bishops, this edition, which was published in 1568, was called the *Bishops' Bible*. While the Genevan Bible continued to be read in private houses, and was an especial favourite with the Puritans of that age, the *Bishops' Bible* was used in the public services of the church; and in another fifty years served as the basis of the present *Authorized Version*, the history of which we shall relate in our next paper.





# V

**THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE**



## V.

### **THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE.**



OF the various translations of the Bible into English, described in the last chapter, the *Bishops' Bible* continued to be used in the services of the church, while the Geneva Bible—an especial favourite with the Puritan party—kept its place in the homes of the people. Copies also of previous translations were scattered up and down the country, but were fast becoming scarce. This to 1611, when the present, or *Authorized Version* (commonly written *A. V.*) made its appearance under the authority and sanction of the king, James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland. To relate the story of this translation is our present purpose.

When, in 1603, that “bright occidental star,” Queen Elizabeth, faded from human view, the eyes of the nation were anxiously turned towards her “cousin of Scotland.” The Puritans hailed the new monarch with the liveliest satisfaction. He

had been educated a Presbyterian ; he had subscribed to the solemn league and covenant ; he had subsequently restated his attachment to its principles. In the general assembly at Edinburgh, in 1590, "when standing with his bonnet off, and his hands lifted up to heaven, 'he praised God that he was born in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place as to be king of such a church, the sincerest [purest] kirk in the world. The Church of Geneva,' said he, 'keep Pasche and Yule ; what have they for them ? They have no institution. As for our neighbour kirk of England, their service is an evil-said mass in English ; they want nothing of the mass but the liftings. I charge you, my good ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort the people to do the same ; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life, shall maintain the same.' " While the Puritans rejoiced at the advent of such a king, the Bishops, on the other hand, "dreaded the reckoning which was to come." "For, indeed," says Strype, "he [Whitgift] and some of the bishops, particularly the Bishop of London [Bancroft], feared much that when this king came to reign in this realm, he would favour the new discipline, and make altera-

tions in the ecclesiastical government and liturgy." Scarcely had James crossed the border on his royal progress to London, before he showed what manner of spirit he was of. It is said that, in conversing with some of his English counsellors about his prerogative, he exclaimed joyously, "Do I make the judges? Do I make the bishops? Then, God's wounds! I make what likes me, law and gospel." "Though he had hardly ever had the due and proper authority of a king in his own country, he had long indulged in a speculative absolutism, and, as far as his cowardice and indolence allowed him, he came fully prepared to rule the people of England as a despot." Ready at length to take a definite position, he issued (October 24th, 1603) a proclamation, summoning a meeting of leading Churchmen and Puritans, for the discussion of ecclesiastical matters. At this conference at *Hampton Court*, sixteen dignitaries of the Church—of whom nine were bishops—represented the prelatical party, and only four Puritan ministers—and those selected by the king—were allowed to appear on the other side. Even these four were not admitted at the first meeting of the conference (held January 14th, 1604); but, while the bishops entered the privy chamber, they—Dr. Rainolds, Dr.

Sparkes, Mr. Knewstubs, and Mr. Chaderton,—were left sitting on a form outside ; when “ the door was close shut by my Lord Chamberlain.” Yet to one of these insulted men it was that we are principally indebted for our present version of the sacred Scriptures, which, more truly than the writings of “ Dan Chaucer,” may be called “ the well of English undefiled.” On the other side of that closed door the king opened the conference with an oration of an hour’s length, whose opening sentence was the key-note of the whole : “ Religion is the soul of a kingdom, and unity the life of religion.” On the second day of the conference they were called in, not so much for the free statement of their opinions, as to be subjected to five hours’ brow-beating from the monarch and his friends, in illustration, it is assumed, of that *religion* and *unity* of which the “ English Solomon ” had spoken. When, for example, Dr. Rainolds (at that time a distinguished professor in the University of Oxford) objected to the apocryphal books, and quoted *Ecclesiasticus* xlviii. 10, his Majesty said, “ with a pleasant apostrophe to the lords : What, trow ye, makes these men so angry with *Ecclesiasticus* ? By my soul, I think he was a bishop ; or they would never use him so.” And when the same

learned divine proposed that the inferior country clergy should be allowed to meet together at fixed times for the discussion of theological subjects, James broke forth: "If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery, it agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack and Will and Dick shall meet and censure me and my council. Therefore, I say again, *Le roi s'avisera*. Stay, I pray you, one seven years; and then, if you find me grow pursy and fat, I may perhaps hearken unto you; for that government will keep me in breath, and give me work enough." This second session of the conference closed by the king saying, of the Puritan quarternion, as he left the chamber, "If this be all they have to say, I shall make them conform themselves, or I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse." The worse was suggested during the third and last session (January 18th), when the king defended the proceedings of the Spanish Inquisition. Upon this, Whitgift exclaimed, in a rapture of admiration, "Undoubtedly your Majesty speaks by the special assistance of God's Spirit!" and Bancroft, falling upon his knees, said, "I protest, my heart melteth with joy, that Almighty God, of His singular mercy, hath given us such a king as, since Christ's time, the like hath not been!"



It was at the second session of this memorable conference that Dr. Reynolds proposed a *new translation of the Scriptures*. "To which motion," says Barlow (*Sum and Substance of the Conference*, p. 45), "there was at present no gainsaying, the objections being trivial and old, and already in print, often answered; only my Lord of London well added that, if every man's humour should be followed, there would be no end of translating. Whereupon his Highness wished that some special pains should be taken in that behalf, for one uniform translation (professing that he had never yet seen a good translation into English, but the worst of all he thought the Genevan to be); and this is to be done by the best learned men of both Universities; after them to be reviewed by the Bishops and the chief learned men of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly to be ratified by his royal authority; and so this whole Church to be bound unto it, and no other." "And hence it was," says Conant, "that though this measure was suggested by the obnoxious party he was resolved to crush, and was evidently relied on by the Nonconformist leaders for the promotion of the New Discipline, it was quietly appropriated by James, and used for his own purposes."

Bancroft, having been appointed the general overseer and final reviser of the work, pushed it forward with great alacrity. By the end of July fifty-four translators had been selected from the most eminent scholars in the country, and arranged into six committees, of which two were to sit at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. It may be not uninteresting to the reader to be informed who those were who composed these several companies, and the mode in which they performed the task allotted to them.

1. The *first*, ten in number, sat at Westminster, under the presidency of *Dr. Launcelot Andrews* (Dean of Westminster, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester), who was also president of the whole body of translators. Bishop Andrews was familiar with fifteen different languages, exclusive, it is said, of Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Greek, and Latin. *Dr. John Overall* (Dean of St. Paul's, afterwards Bishop of Norwich); *Dr. Adrian à Savarius* (Canon of Westminster); *Dr. Richard Clarke* (one of the six preachers); *Dr. John Layfield* (afterwards Rector of St. Clement's Danes); *Dr. Robert Tighe* (Archdeacon of Middlesex); *Dr. Francis Burleigh* (Vicar of Bishop Stortford); *Dr. Geoffrey or Wilfrid King* (Regius Professor of Hebrew in

Cambridge); *Richard Thompson, M.A.*; and *William Redwell*, the best Arabic scholar of his time, of whom Lightfoot says, "The industrious and thrice-learned, to whom I will rather be a scholar than take on me to teach others." To this company was allotted Genesis to the end of the Second Book of Kings.

2. The *second*, which sat at Cambridge, under the direction of *Edward Livlie* (Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge), included *Dr. John Richardson* (Master of Trinity); *Dr. Laurence Chader-ton* (First Master of Emmanuel College—"If you will not be master," said Sir Walter Mildmay, "I will not be founder"); *Francis Dillingham* (an eminent Grecian); *Thomas Harrison* (Vice-Chancellor of Trinity); *Dr. Roger Andrews* (brother of Iaucelot, and afterwards Prebendary of Chichester); *Dr. Robert Spalding* (afterwards successor of Livlie as Regius Professor of Hebrew); *Dr. Andrew King* (afterwards successor of Spalding as Regius Professor of Hebrew). To this company was apportioned 1 Chronicles to Ecclesiastes, inclusive.

3. The *third* sat at Oxford, under the presidency of *Dr. John Harding* (then Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford). Under him were *Dr. John*

*Rainolds* (President of Corpus Christi, the man who moved the king for this new translation. "The memory and reading of that man," said Bishop Hall, "were near to a miracle; and all Europe at the time could not have produced three men superior to Rainolds, Jewell, and Ussher, all of this same college." He died while the work was in progress. Even during his *sickness* his coadjutors met at his lodgings once a week, to compare and perfect their notes). *Dr. Thomas Holland* (Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford); *Dr. Richard Kilby* (afterwards Professor of Hebrew); *Dr. Miles Smith* (afterwards Bishop of Gloucester); *Dr. Richard Brett* (a most eminent linguist, Rector of Quainton); and *Richard Fairclough* (Rector of Bucknell). The work of this company was the translation of the remaining books of the Old Testament.

4. The *fourth* committee also sat at Oxford, under the direction of *Dr. Thomas Ravis* (afterwards Bishop of London), and comprised *Dr. George Abbott* (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury); *Dr. John Aglionby* (Principal of St. Edmund's Hall); *Dr. Giles Tomson* (afterwards Bishop of Gloucester); *Sir Henry Savile* (Greek Tutor to Elizabeth, Provost of Eton, and Editor of St.

Chrysostom's Works in Greek); *Dr John Peryn* (Professor of Greek); *Dr. Leonard Hutten* (Vicar of Flower); and *Dr. John Harmer* (Warden of Winchester College). Matthew to the Acts, inclusive, and the Revelation, were allotted to this committee.

5. The *fifth* committee sat at Westminster, under the management of *Dr. William Barlow* (Bishop of Rochester), and included *Dr. Ralph Hutchenson* (President of St. John's, Oxford); *Dr. John Spencer* (who succeeded Rainolds as President of Corpus Christi); *Dr. Roger Fenton* (Prebendary of St. Paul's); *Michael Rabbett, B.D.* (Rector of St. Vedast, London); *Dr. Thomas Sanderson* (Arch-deacon of Rochester); and *William Dakins, B.D.* (Greek Lecturer, Cambridge). This company undertook Romans to Jude, inclusive.

6. The *sixth* committee, under the presidency of *Dr. Duport*, sat at Westminster, and included seven translators, to whom were assigned the books of the Apocrypha.

These committees having been appointed, certain instructions, of which the following is a summary, were sent to each of them, by authority of the king:—(1) The Bishops' Bible to be followed, and as little altered as possible. (2) The proper

names to be retained as they are commonly used. (3) The old ecclesiastical words to be kept ; as the word *church*, not to be translated *congregation*. (4) That meaning of a word to be kept which has been commonly used by the ancient Fathers. (5) The division of chapters to be altered as little as possible. (6) No marginal notes to be affixed, save as explanations of the Hebrew or Greek words. (7) References to other texts of Scripture to be inserted in the margin. (8) Each man of each company to take the same portion, and then the rest of the company to revise what was thus done. (9) On a book being done by one company, it was to be sent to the rest in succession for further revision. (10) The committees to meet together for the settlement of any renderings on which there may not be perfect agreement. (11) The judgment of all learned men to be solicited on doubtful or obscure places. (12) The bishops and the clergy to be requested to forward to the committees any notes they may have made on particular passages. (13) This rule related to the appointment of the presidents of the committees. (14) Tyn-dale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Cranmer's, and the Genevan translation to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible.

Such were the committees, and such were their instructions. The learned Selden (*Table Talk*), observes: "The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world. . . . The translation of King James's time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue, as the Apocrypha to Andrew Downs; and then they met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, etc. If they found any fault, they spoke; if not, he read on." So great a work took much time; and yet less than, from its important nature, and the care with which it was executed, might have been expected. "It is not fully ascertained when these men sat down to their work. The different parties might not all commence at the same moment, but, on the whole, it may be presumed, that, with the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New before them all along, the first revision of the sacred text by the forty-seven occupied about *four years*; the second examination by twelve, or two selected out of each company, *nine months* more; and the sheets passing through the press, *other two years*, when the Bible of 1611 was finished

and first issued" (*Anderson*). Its passage through the press was superintended by Dr. Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, of whom the former, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, wrote the preface.

"And now, after long expectation, and great desire," says Mr. Fuller, "came forth the new translation of the Bible, most beautifully printed, by a *select* and *competent* number of *divines* appointed for that purpose; not being too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things might haply escape them; who, neither coveting praise for expedition, nor fearing reproach for slackness (seeing in a business of moment none deserve blame for convenient slowness), had expended almost *three* [? four] *years* on the work, not only examining the *channels* by the *fountain*, *translations* with the *original*, which was absolutely necessary, but also comparing *channels* with *channels*, which was abundantly useful in the Spanish, Italian, French, and Dutch (German) languages. These, with *Jacob*, *rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well of life*; so that now even *Rachel's* weak women may freely *come* both to *drink* themselves and *water the flocks* of their *families* at the *same*." The great pains bestowed upon this work



by the translators may be suggested by an incident recorded by Isaac Walton, in his life of Dr. Sanderson. It will be seen, on referring to the foregoing list of the translators, that Dr. Sanderson was a member of one of the Westminster committees. At that time a very young man (he was born 1587), it is probable that, although he possessed "a metaphysical brain and a matchless memory," he was less consulted on some points than men of riper scholarship. Some time after, Sanderson, preaching in some church in Derbyshire, took occasion to censure one part of the translation, and showed three reasons why a particular word should have been otherwise translated. It happened that Dr. Kilbie, another of the translators, but upon another committee, was present, and "honest Isaac" says, "When evening prayer was ended, the preacher was invited to the Doctor's friend's house, where, after some slight conference, the Doctor told him he might have preached more useful doctrine, and not have filled his auditors' ears with needless exceptions against the late translation ; and that for that word for which he offered to that poor congregation *three* reasons why it ought to have been translated as he said, he and others had considered all them, and found *thirteen more considerable reasons*

why it was translated as now printed." From this incident it may be surmised how greatly each doubtful point was debated, and what pains the translators were at to render exactly the words of the original text. After all this care, the evidence in favour of one rendering seemed many times as strong as in favour of the one retained ; and in such cases, words in italics were inserted in the margin ; in other instances, where no English equivalent could be hit upon, words to complete the sense, also in italics, were inserted in the text. Rather than too greatly disturb the division of chapters and verses, which would have had the effect of throwing all quotations from the Scriptures in other writings into confusion, the paragraph mark (*i.e.* ¶) was used at certain points to denote that at that place a new subject was commenced.

The work of translating and issuing this new version was not completed without great cost. Yet, on examining the history, we find that it was "*not* an affair of government, *not* a royal undertaking at his Majesty's expense, according to the popular and very erroneous historical fiction, but simply a transaction in the course of business. If we inquire for any single royal grant, or look for any act of personal generosity, we search in vain." Mr.

William Ball, in the year 1651, defending the patented monopoly enjoyed by the Barkers for more than seventy years, says: "I conceive the sole printing of the Bible and Testament, with power of restraint in others, to be of right the property of one Matthew Barker, citizen and stationer of London, in regard that his father paid for the amended or corrected translation of the Bible £3,500; by reason whereof the translated copy did belong to him and his assigns." Indeed, from 1577 to 1709, that is, for 132 years, "not a single copy of the sacred volume had issued from the press in which this *one* family—father, sons, and grandsons—had not a personal pecuniary interest." The sum of £3,500, named above, more than covered all the charges of the work of translating. It does not appear that the translators received anything while they were working in detached committees; and that only very moderate expenses were incurred when representatives from each committee took up their residence in London during the final revision.

More than two centuries and a half have passed away since the present authorized version made its first appearance. During that time many words in our language (some of them to be hereafter ex-

plained) have either become obsolete or have changed their meaning. The patient studies of philologists, the persevering investigations of travellers and historians, the discovery of ancient manuscripts—as, for example, the *Codex Vaticanus*, in our own times, and the light that a more perfect knowledge and advanced science have thrown upon many things that were formerly obscure; have suggested to many minds that the time has come when an altogether new translation, or, at any rate, a corrected version of the one now in use, might advantageously be made. Against such an undertaking, many powerful reasons may be adduced. But whether or not this great work be undertaken by duly authorized and competent hands, of this we may be assured, that the most advanced scholarship of the present day—though it might here and there substitute more appropriate words and phrases for others that have, with the lapse of time, become obscure or obsolete—would not alter in any material degree the substantial teaching of that book which, to quote the words of John Locke, “has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any admixture of error, for its water.” To the man who values the thoughts of God, “the Bible is a precious storehouse, and the Magna

Charta of a Christian. There he reads of his heavenly Father's love, and of his dying Saviour's legacies. There he sees a map of his travels through the wilderness, and a landscape, too, of Canaan. And when he climbs on Pisgah's top, and views the promised land, his heart begins to burn, delighted with the blessed prospect, and amazed at the rich and free salvation. But a mere professor, though a decent one, looks on the Bible as a dull book, and peruseth it with such indifference as you would read the title-deeds belonging to another man's estate."\*

\* Berridge.

## **VI.**

### **HISTORICAL COPIES AND CURIOUS EDITIONS OF THE BIBLE.**



## VI.

### *HISTORICAL COPIES AND CURIOUS EDITIONS OF THE BIBLE.*

N the course of these chapters on matters connected with Bible Lore—popularly treated—we now pass away from subjects that to many of our readers may have seemed dry, to others that, to a larger number, will probably be more interesting, and perhaps not less instructive.

While the Bible, including the story of the MSS. of celebrated commentaries ; of famous versions, and translations ancient and modern, has a wonderful history of its own ; so also have many single copies and editions of the Book. Treasured up in private collections, stowed away on the shelves of public libraries, or exposed to view under glass cases in various museums, are copies of the Sacred Word, which, for their historical associations, vie in interest with any domestic relics that have survived the influences of time and change. Indeed, within the narrower circle of



private history, how many old copies of God's Word there are, prized as heirlooms, that, if they could speak, would tell strange tales of family vicissitudes ! Old Bibles with valued family registers and precious autographs, esteemed chiefly as containing the thoughts of God ; but also, though in a less degree, because in some former generation they were centres of such scenes as the Scottish poet has described with such inimitable pathos in words familiar to us all :—

“The cheerfu’ supper done, wi’ serious face  
They round the ingle form a circle wide ;  
The sire turns o’er, wi’ patriarchal grace,  
The big ha’-Bible, ance his father’s pride ;  
His bonnet rev’rently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets wearin’ thin an’ bare ;  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He wales a portion with judicious care ;  
And ‘Let us worship God !’ he says, with solemn air.”

Books bought when the bread of life was dear—by hoarded savings, painfully accumulated ; bought, not for religious ornaments, to be presently displayed with ponderous clasps and resplendent binding on some conspicuous sideboard—reminding one somewhat painfully of the ostentatious phylactery of olden Pharisee ; but bought for pious uses, of which the fragrant memories seem yet to hover

over their well-worn pages. Books in plain but substantial bindings, exhibited to curious visitors by humble cottagers, and that with no small pride on account of the words, "From your friend Victoria," inscribed upon the fly-leaf. Books—one, at any rate—with more attractive exterior, presented to a swarthy savage prince by the same noble woman in answer to an inquiry concerning "The true source of Britain's greatness;" or purchased with the pence of many thousand scholars in our Sunday-schools, and presented to a royal princess as a bridal gift. Books—these latter ones—that need only to be viewed through the haze of a greater antiquity, to be regarded as interestingly historical as that famous copy of the sacred writings which brave Hugh Latimer presented to our eighth Henry, with, so it is said, the leaf turned down that contained our Lord's exposition of the law of divorce.

Steering away from these little creeks of private narrative, with all their picturesque surroundings, for the open sea of public history; it is there, as among islands of the ocean, that we find the most fitting examples of what we mean by historical copies of the word of God. And even here, though our skiff wind among an archipelago of noble

instances, we can pause to mention only three or four, as illustrations of many, that the Bible student, curious in such matters, may register in his book of common-places.

1. What a dainty volume must this have been when, in its cover of royal blue velvet, it first came from the binder's hands, enriched with ornamental devices by the decorator's art! Still clearly distinguishable upon it are the badge of the Principality within the quarter, surmounted by a royal coronet in silver gilt; the initials C.P., apparently improperly altered to an R.; and the badges of the Rose and Thistle. When Mr. Roach Smith wrote a description of this volume in his *Collectanea Antiqua*, it was in the possession of James Skene, Esq. (formerly of Rubislaw, and afterwards of Oxford), the last survivor of the six friends to whom Sir Walter Scott dedicated the respective cantos of *Marmion*. The interest that attaches to this volume is derived from the fact that it is believed to have been a dying gift of King Charles I. to his son, the Prince of Wales. Sir Thomas Herbert, who was in attendance upon the king, says (in his *Threnodia Carolina*—last two years of Charles I.). "The king thereupon gave him his hand to kiss: having the day before been graciously

pleased, under his royal hand, to give him a certificate that the said Mr. Herbert was not imposed upon him, but by his Majesty made choice of to attend him in his bedchamber, and had served him with faithfulness and loyal affection. His Majesty also delivered him his Bible, in the margin whereof he had, with his own hand, written many annotations and quotations, and charged him to give it to the prince so soon as he returned." The story that it was to "honest, plain-spoken Juxon," Bishop of Winchester, that this gift was confided on the scaffold, may have been originated by the fact that after that prelate had said, "You have now but one stage more—the stage is turbulent and troublesome, but it is a very short one—it will soon carry you a very great way—it will carry you from earth to heaven;" the king gave his *George* to Juxon, with the single word "Remember!" It was not unnatural that afterwards the idea should arise that the *Bible* went with the *George*, as indeed it may have done, having been probably entrusted to the worthy bishop for that purpose by Sir Thomas Herbert himself. Whether the son greatly profited by the father's dying bequest will be doubted by most who are at all conversant with the character of the *merry* monarch.

2. A remarkable contrast to the last, both in appearance and history, is presented by the field-preaching Bible of the apostolic Wesley, whose first sermon in the fields is said to have been delivered, the rain meanwhile descending in torrents, as he stood under a sycamore tree in the neighbourhood of Kingswood, from that singularly appropriate text, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven," etc. This constant companion of the great modern evangelist, a small pocket Bible, is now held, along with the "Conference seal," by the President of the Wesleyan Conference for the time being. If not a "key of office," it is a constant reminder of that great religious leader who, like his Divine Master, went out into the highways and hedges, preaching the gospel to the poor, and whom the common people heard so gladly; and who, writing to one whose style was very fine, said, "When I had been a member of the University about ten years, I wrote and talked much as you do now; but when I talked to plain people in the castle or the town, I observed they gaped and stared. This quickly obliged me to alter my style, and adopt the language of those I spoke to. And yet there is a dignity in this simplicity which is not disagreeable to those of the

highest rank." May the mission of Methodism be vigorously promoted by a practical remembrance of the use of this pocket Bible of its venerated founder!

3. Carefully preserved beneath a glass case in the British Museum, where any visitor may see it, is the volume known as the Bib'e of Charlemagne. This great king invited from England the learned Alcuin, made him his companion, employed him to write in the defence of orthodox Christianity, and founded an academy over which Alcuin presided. It is certainly creditable to an age essentially Popish that Alcuin presented his illustrious pupil with this magnificent folio copy of the sacred Scriptures. "It is bound in velvet, the leaves are of vellum, and the writing is in double columns. Prefixed is a richly ornamented frontispiece in gold and colours. It is enriched with four large paintings, besides seals, historical allusions, initial capitals, and emblematical devices, which well represent, not only the state of the art at that early date, but also the undoubted reverence that was then paid to the Holy Scriptures." This precious manuscript was sold in 1836, by public auction in London, for £700.

4. About twenty years before this last-named

Bible was brought to the hammer, *i.e.* in March, 1814, the library of the Rev. S. Palmer, of Hackney, was sold. Among the books then disposed of was a Bible bound in morocco, and printed by Bill and Barker. This book, put up by itself, was presently knocked down to Samuel Whitbread, Esq., for the sum of £21. So high a price for so unpretending a volume is accounted for by the fact that, along with the "Book of Martyrs," it constituted the whole library of John Bunyan during his long imprisonment in Bedford gaol. The glorious old dreamer has gone to the land where dreaming is unknown, but where the purest visions of earth are more than realized. His wish is fulfilled: "Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord! And, after that, they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them." He has realized his dream, of which the record remains, "as natural as Shakespeare, as

familiar as Robinson Crusoe, and as idiomatic as the Authorized Version, the spring and fountain of the glorious dreamer's inspiration ; it has been read with avidity wherever the English language is spoken, and has been translated into more than thirty languages besides,—an honour paid to no other book, the Book of God alone excepted."

5. On some accounts a copy of the Bible now to be described is yet more interesting than those already referred to. It is with this Bible that the name of William Bowyer is associated, and hence it is known as the "Bowyer Bible." This William Bowyer, having procured a copy of Macklin's edition of the Bible (so called from the Macklins of Fleet Street, engravers, though it was printed and published by Thomas Bensley, who died in 1835), occupied the leisure of nearly thirty years in illustrating it. From every part of Europe he obtained original drawings, etchings, and engravings relating to biblical subjects. This collection also included the best Scripture atlases ; but its most original features were two hundred drawings by Lautherbourg. Thus, for all these years, he advanced in his work, bringing into requisition every artist, from Michael Angelo and Raffaele to Keynolds and West, whose Scripture subjects had been engraved.



His Bible, interleaved with these *seven thousand* illustrations, including examples from nearly six hundred different engravers, expanded to forty-five folio volumes, and is said, with its costly binding and an oak cabinet to contain it, to have cost him *four thousand guineas*, and to have been insured in the Albion Fire Office for £3,000. William Bowyer at length died, and his Bible having been disposed of by lottery, for the benefit of his daughter, became the prize of a Somersetshire farmer. Since then it has passed into various hands in succession, and is now the property of Mr. Robert Heywood, of Bolton, by whom it was purchased, in 1856, at the sale of the extensive library of Mr. Albinson of the same town, for £550. "Ponderous as such a work must be for any private library, it would nevertheless be a pity that so unique a collection should ever be broken up and scattered."

Very easy would it be to fill an entire volume, and that not of the smallest, with pleasant gossip about many historical copies of the Bible, of which those named may be regarded as examples. But another matter has also to be discussed in this one chapter.

Several *editions* of the Holy Scriptures, or of

books passing under the name of *Bibles*, have at various times been issued from the press, which the young Bible student will pronounce *curious* in an eminent degree.

1. Thus, between the years 1420 and 1435 was executed, in a sort of black letter, what was called "*The Biblia Pauperum*," or, Poor Man's Bible. It is a pictorial abridgment of the Bible, containing forty leaves, of a small folio size. These rudely executed cuts, intermingled with Latin inscriptions by way of explanation, are ten inches in length, by seven and a half inches in breadth. Each of these full-page engravings contains three subjects, taken from the Scriptures, in separate compartments, and form half-length figures of prophets and other Bible worthies in smaller divisions, two at the top and two at the bottom. Some knowledge of Divine truth must have been made intelligible to the comprehension of the people generally, who, although much of error was contained in the rude embellishments, and what there was of truth might be concealed by the Latin of the inscriptions, would yet desire to possess more of a book that professed to be Divine and to show the way to eternal life. Probably the cuts were intended as a popular translation of the Latin inscriptions, and not impossibly,

were designed to be a clever evasion of a law of Henry V., passed just before "the *Biblia Pauperum*" was issued; wherein it is enacted "that whatsoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother-tongue, they should forfeit land, catel, lif, and godes from their heyres, for ever; and so be condemned for heretykes to God, enemies to the crown, and most errant traitors to the lande." Indeed, it was not till near a hundred years after this, in the time of Henry VIII., and when the Reformation was an accomplished fact, that a law was made, "that all men might read the Scriptures, except servants; but no women, except ladies and gentlewomen, who had leisure, and might ask somebody the meaning." The passing of this law shows that Bibles had greatly multiplied at that time, that people had access to them, and were not unwilling to make use of the opportunity of reading God's word: while the repeal of this law in the next reign may suggest the growth of public opinion, and the increased knowledge of the book itself.

2. In the year 1643 Oliver Cromwell ordered an edition of the Bible to be prepared for the use of his army. Until very recently bibliographers had not been able to decide what *edition* of the Bible was selected for the purpose. At length a Mr

Livermore, of Cambridge, Mass., discovered what is known as "*The Soldier's Bible*;" and after a long and diligent search in many libraries one other copy has been found, and that is in the British Museum. "The Soldier's Pocket Bible" consisted of appropriate selections from the Scriptures, printed in a pamphlet form, on a single sheet folded in 16mo, and making sixteen pages. It was generally buttoned between the coat and the vest, next the heart. The title-page reads as follows: "The Souldier's Pocket Bible: containing the most (if not all) those places contained in Holy Scripture, which doe shew the qualifications of his inner man, that is, a fit souldier to fight the Lord's battels, both before he fight, in the fight, and after the fight; which scriptures are reduced to several heads, and fitly applyed to the souldier's several occasions, and so may supply the want of the whole Bible, which a souldier cannot conveniently carry about him. And may be also usefull for any Christian to meditate upon, now in this miserable time of warre.—Imprimature, *Edm. Calauny*. Printed at *London*, by G. B. and R. W. for G. C. 1643." The selections from Scripture are divided into eighteen chapters, each with an appropriate heading to indicate the class of scripture contained therein. A few examples

of these headings and titles will sufficiently show their general character. "1. A souldier must not doe wickedly. 2. A souldier must be valiant for God's cause. 3. A souldier must pray before he go to fight." Mr. Livermore refers to the remarkable fact, "that the success of Cromwell's army commenced immediately on the publication of the Souldier's Pocket Bible ; and they never after lost a battle."

3. Perhaps the most curious editions of the sacred Scriptures that have yet been issued from the press are those intended for the use of the blind ; the distinguishing feature of each of these being the use of raised uncoloured characters of a large and peculiar form, and on one side only of the paper. These characters in relief upon the paper are like the impression of a seal ; while on the under side of the paper they seem pressed in on a seal. It is supposed that now about two thousand blind persons in this country are, by the help of these curious contrivances, "feeling after God, if haply they may find Him."

4. Curious editions of the Bible contain some remarkable instances of interpretations and omissions. To the former of these belong a French Bible, printed at Paris in 1538, by Anthony Bonne-

mere, wherein it is related "that the ashes of the golden calf which Moses caused to be burnt and mixed with the water that was drunk by the Israelites, stuck to the beards of such as had fallen down before it; by which they appeared with gilt beards, as a peculiar mark to distinguish those who had worshipped the calf." This idle story is actually interwoven with the thirty-second chapter of Exodus. And Bonnemere says in his preface, this French Bible was printed in 1495, at the request of his most Christian Majesty Charles VIII. ; and declares further, that the French translator "has added nothing but the genuine truths, according to the express terms of the Latin Bible ; nor omitted anything but what was improper to be translated !" So that we are to look upon this fiction of the gilded beards as matter of fact ; and another of the same stamp, inserted in the chapter above mentioned, viz., "that upon Aaron's refusing to make gods for the Israelites, they spat upon him with so much fury and violence that they quite suffocated him." "These passages are probably traditions, but they are sufficient proofs of that shameless audacity of interpolation which would endeavour to taint even the most sacred of books." We have all heard of an edition of the Bible in which the word

"not" was omitted from certain of the commandments, by which printer's error they were made to enforce the vices they were designed to prohibit. Besides the suppression in Paris of *Matthew's Bible*, already noted in the fourth chapter of this work, there were other editions printed in whole or in part, that for sundry reasons, good or bad, were suppressed. Such was the fate of the Dutch Bible, by Jacob Van Leisvelt (1542), famous also as having been the cause of the decapitation of its printer; of the French Bible, by Rene Benoist, of Paris (1566), in three folio volumes; of a Swedish Bible, in 4to, printed in 1622, at Lubeck, and which was very defective; of a German Bible, of which only a part was printed in 1666, at Helmstedt; and of the French Bible of Marolles, printed in folio in 1671, and of which only about half the Pentateuch had left the press. It would be easy to extend the length of this chapter by an enumeration of some of the incorrect editions that have at different times appeared. Thus, in 1698, Mrs. Anderson of Edinburgh issued a Bible that was notoriously incorrect and ill-printed. In it are such blunders as the following: "*against Satan*," for "*against himself*" (Mark iii. 26); "*ye were not the servants of sin*," for "*ye were the servants of sin*"

Rom. vii. 17); "*eject*," for "*elect*" (Rom. viii. 33); and many more errors of an equally glaring description. Some editions of the Bible are curious on account of their being complete translations by private individuals. Such, for example, is the one by John McRay of London, the Glasgow edition of whose Bible, printed in 1815, bears the following title: "A revised translation and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, after the eastern manner, from concurrent authorities of the critics', interpreters', and commentators' copies and versions, shewing that the Inspired Writings contain the seeds of the valuable sciences, being the source whence the ancient philosophers derived them; also the most ancient histories, and greatest antiquities, with a philosophical and medical commentary; the use of the commentary is not to give the sense of the text, as that is done in the interpretation, but to describe the works of nature, shewing the connection of natural science with Revealed Religion."

The young Bible student, whose eye rests upon these pages, may not be so fortunate as to possess any copy of the word of God that the mere antiquarian would very highly prize or covet; but the Book that he loves to study may, through



him, become historic in its influence, as did the Bible that young Luther read at Erfurt. Inspired by the truths it reveals, and actuated by the principles it inculcates, his shilling copy of the sacred Scriptures may, through him, affect the hearts of the companions of his evening walks, or of the subjects of his Sabbath toil ; and in future ages, when every secret thing shall be made known, it may be discovered how God's truth, radiating from him, as from a heaven-illuminated centre, has attracted within the religious world men who became historic personages in the Church of Christ, and who, in their own persons, and in the fruit of their labours, have contributed to the fulfilment of that glorious prediction, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

## **VII.**

### **PECULIAR WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE BIBLE.**



## VII.

### *PECULIAR WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE BIBLE.*

EW things have undergone greater changes, with the progress of time, than language. Languages that were once the vernacular dialects of mighty nations have altogether ceased to be spoken; while other tongues have undergone such important changes that if an Englishman—to take our own nation as an example—who had fallen asleep some five centuries ago, were to awake, and think to express his wants in the language last upon his lips, he would find himself as little understood by his own descendants as if he were a native of the Celestial Empire newly arrived in England from Hong Kong. Probably there are not many living languages that have undergone such extensive and rapid changes as our own. Our commercial and other relations with foreign countries are constantly resulting in the importation of words from abroad; while the multiplying of inventions and new processes in the arts and sciences

is as constantly issuing in the creation of new words as the adopted symbols of new things. Words once in common use have been relegated to nooks and corners of provincial dialects, where they yet maintain a brave but unequal conflict with the march of refinement. Other words, now more commonly used than ever in some cases, or less frequently in others, have so parted from their original meaning that a sentence composed two or three hundred years ago, in the purest English spoken then, needs now to be translated by the aid of a dictionary as ancient as the book in which the sentence stands. It is no uncommon thing, when the works of some old author are reissued, for the editor to tell us that the spelling has been modernized throughout, and that obsolete words have been replaced by their modern equivalents, or explained in some other more convenient mode. Recent editions of the Puritan divines, many of whom were not born till after the present authorized version of the Bible made its appearance, are noteworthy illustrations of this modernizing process; and even the Bible itself has in part been subjected to it, since many of the old spellings of the first edition of 1611 have been replaced by more familiar forms. "Language, being a living organic thing,

is, by the very condition of its vital existence, by the law of life itself, necessarily always in a progressive or, at least, a fluctuating state. To fix it, therefore, to petrify it into immutable forms, is impossible ; and, were it possible, would be fatal to it as a medium of intercommunication suited to the ever-changeful life of man."

Now, with the exception of some few instances of corrected spelling, the appearance of the English Bible at this day is the same as the first issue of two hundred and sixty years ago. In common with all books printed at that remote period, it contains a vast number of words and phrases which are scarcely intelligible to many readers. To remedy this evil, some propose an entirely new translation of the original text, for which there are greater facilities than the last body of translators possessed ; some would be content with a simple revision of the present version ; and others think that the English people should be educated "up to the comprehension of the purest and most idiomatic forms of expression which belong to their mother-tongue." One very competent authority does not hesitate to avow his "conviction that, if any body of scholars, of competent Greek and Hebrew learning, were now to undertake, not a revision of the

existing version, but a new translation, founded on the principle of employing the current phraseology of the day, it would be found much less intelligible to the mass of English-speaking people than the standard version at this moment is. . . . To attempt a new translation of the Bible, in the hope of finding within the compass of the English language a clearer, a more appropriate, or a more forcible diction than that of the standard version, is to betray an ignorance of the capabilities of our native speech with which it would be in vain to reason; and I suppose no scholars, whose opinions are entitled to respect, seriously propose anything beyond a revision which should limit itself to the correction of ascertained errors, the introduction of greater uniformity of expression, and the substitution of modern words for such as have become either obsolete or so changed in meaning as to convey to the unlearned a mistaken impression."

Our purpose in this paper is not to express an opinion as to the course which may be most advantageously pursued, but simply to state the case, and to point out to the young student of the word of God a *few* out of the great multitude of the peculiar words and phrases that exist in the present authorized version of the English Bible.

1. Prominent among these are such words as have during the last two centuries and a half become altogether or nearly *obsolete*. It may not be possible to form an exact classification of such words; but a little consideration will show that many of them must relate to exploded opinions, and to old fashions and customs that have long since passed away. Take, as an example, the military art. The study of "the art of war" has produced quite a new order of things in the equipments of the soldier, and in modes of attack and defence. The very term by which the warrior was designated—"man of war" (Exod. xv. 3; Josh. xvii. 1; Luke xxiii. 11)—is now limited to "ships of the line," though both Shakspeare\* and Bacon† apply it to the soldier; while the introduction of improved accoutrements have rendered *hors de combat* such words as "*habergeon*" (= a little coat-of-mail covering the head and shoulders, Exod. xxviii. 32; Neh. iv. 16, etc.), and "*buckler*" (= a shield with a *boucle*, or knob, 2 Sam. xxii. 31; Job. xv. 26, etc.), and "*greaves*" (= plates of

\* "How far is it to Berkley? And what stir keeps good old York there with his *men of war*?"—*Richard II.*, ii. 3.

† "Kings have to deale with their neighbours; . . . their merchants; their commons; and their *men of warre*."—*Essay* xix.



brass to cover the legs, 1 Sam. xvii. 6), and "*gorget*" (= defensive armour for the throat, 1 Sam. xvii. 6), and "*target*" (= a shield, 1 Sam. xvii. 6; 1 Kings x. 16). "*Shield*" is only known as a verb, the noun having passed out of use. "*Harness*" (1 Kings xx. 11, xxii. 34; 2 Chron. xviii. 33, ix. 24; Psalm lxxviii. 9), which once meant accoutrements in general, whether for man or horse, is now applied to the latter alone; and though a soldier may still carry a sword, he does not call it a "*fau-chion*" (Jud. xiii. 6). He does not now use the "*battlebow*" (Zech. ix. 10, x. 4); and hence "*artil- lery*" (1 Sam. xx. 40; 1 Macc. vi. 51) in its Bible sense is obsolete, the word having come to mean, not only a missile weapon, but the instrument from whence it is projected. "*Munition*" (= a fortress, a defence, Isa. xxix. 7, xxxiii. 16; Nahum ii. 1; Dan. xi. 15, 38, etc.; in some places the word is translated "*stronghold*"), altered to *ammunition*, now signifies means of defence of a special kind; while the word "*rereward*" (= the *rearguard* of an army, 1 Sam. xxix. 2; Isa. li' 12, lviii. 8) has now dropped out of the language. Very similar are the changes that have taken place in musical terms. The "*cithern*"\* (1 Macc. iv. 54), the *sackbut*" (Gen.

\* A.-S. *citere*, Gk. *cithra*, *cittern* (Shakespeare), *gyterne*

xxxvii. 34 ; Isa. iii. 24), the "*tabret*" (Gen. xxxi. 27 , Job. xvii. 6), the "*timbrel*" (Exod. xv. 20 ; Judges xi. 34), the "*viol*" (Isa. v. 12, xiv. 11 ; Amos v. 23, vi. 5), can scarcely be identified, have no place in any modern orchestra—in this country at least ; and hence these words cease to convey any intelligible idea to ordinary readers. The same may be said of many of the terms employed for articles of fashionable attire, than which few things are the subjects of such rapid change. An old poet \* has said,—

"Fashions that are now called new,  
Have been worn by more than you ;  
Elder times have worn the same,  
Though the new ones get the name ;"

instead of the old name being revived with the old fashion. In Isa. iii. 16—24, we have a full description of an ancient fine lady of the olden time ; many of the words descriptive of whose manner and dress have now become obsolete, or stand for something else. It is thus with "*caul*" (= net-work for confining braids of hair, the English word being from the French *cale*, a small cap ; whence *calotte*,

(Piers Ploughman's *Vis.* 8493), the modern *guitar*, and the Chaldee *kathros* (= *harp* in Dan. iii. 5, 7), are forms of the same words.—*Bible Wo. d-Book.*

\* Middleton.

a skull cap), and "*tire*" (= a head-dress; see also Ezek. xxiv. 17, 23; Judges x. 3, xvi. 8: the Persian *tiara* is supposed to be the origin of this word, which, now changed to *attire*, is applied to more than it represented when Milton spelled it *tiar*—

"Of beaming sunnie raies, a golden *tiar*  
Circled his head");

and "*mufflers*" (= a small thin veil for the lower part of the face); and "*bonnets*" (= the conical part of the turban); and "*tablets*" (= smelling bottles), and "*wimples*" (= small shawls), and "*crisping-pins*" (= reticules; see also 2 Kings v. 23), and "*glasses*" (= dresses of some diaphanous material). The term "*mincing*," a word that happily expresses the meaning of the original, the root of which signifies to trip, or to walk with short steps like children, has been supplanted by other terms—the *Grecian bend*, for example—that mean pretty much the same kind of feminine affectation.\*

\* "I would like to know," said Matinka, "what senseless person invented all this foolery, which looks as if only intended for deforming and mocking the works of God." "That I will willingly tell," said Menzikoff, laughing: "One short dame, who would yet appear tall, invented the high-heeled shoes and the tower-like head-dress, another, too lean, or too stout, pressed her body together by means of the bodice to make the fulness across the

While the lady herself, addicted to "changeable suits of apparel," is no longer called a "*damosell*" (Duet. xxii. 15, etc., ed. of 1611), whose modern form "*damsel*" (the diminutive of *dame*, = the mistress of a house) is more frequently applied by us to the maid than to her young mistress.

The march of discovery in the various sciences has thrust many words out of use, and given to many others a meaning different from that which they now convey. This is the case with "*cockatrice*," a word which, to the merest tyro in the study of natural history, conveys no intelligible idea of any existing animal. It was an imaginary creature, supposed to have been hatched by a cock from the egg of a viper, the fable having been invented to account for the name. In heraldry it is depicted as a cock with a dragon's tail. Yet our translators could not have meant this fabulous animal to be understood, since in four out of the five passages

chest more visible; a third concealed her deformed legs under the hooped petticoat; a fourth, her grey hairs with white powder; a fifth, her pale face by means of rouge, etc., etc." (*Perils of Greatness*). If these things be true, there was some force in the words of the old Scotch preacher: "Ye people of Aberdeen get your fashions from Glasgow, and Glasgow from Edinburgh, and Edinburgh from London, and London from Paris, and Paris from the devil!"

(Isa. xi. 8, xiv. 29, lix. 5; Jer. viii. 17; Prov. xxiii. 32, marg.) "adder" is given, either in the text or the margin, as an equivalent. Most likely they thought that 'cockatrice' and 'basilisk' were synonymous. "*Palmerworm*" (Joel i. 4, ii. 25; Amos iv. 9) may mean certain insects in the *caterpillar* stage, whose ravages, on the palm-tree especially, would be noted. The word is now almost obsolete, except, perhaps, in some parts of Dorsetshire, where it is yet the designation of caterpillars in general. "*Unicorn*", "*leviathan*", and "*Behemoth*" are other well-known examples. Many other instances might be quoted. We do not now say "*neesing*" (Job xli. 18), but 'sneezing'; nor "*master builder*" (1 Cor. iii. 10), but 'architect'; nor "*pate*" (Ps. vii. 16), but 'crown of the head'; nor "*scrip*" (Matt. x. 10, etc.), but 'wallet', or 'satchel'; nor "*seethe*" (Exod. xvi. 23, etc.), but 'boil'; nor "*servitor*" (2 Kings iv. 43), but 'man-servant'; nor "*shamefacedness*" (1 Tim. ii. 9), but 'bashfulness', or 'modesty'; not "*scrabble*" (1 Sam. xxi. 13), but 'scrawl'; not "*bray*" (Prov. xxvii. 22), but 'bruise'; not *amerce* (Deut. xxii. 19), but 'impose a fine'; not "*bruit*" (Jer. x. 22), but 'report', or 'rumour'; not "*straightway*" (Prov. vii. 22, etc.), but 'directly'. In such, and in a vast

number of like instances, have words that were once in common use given place to other words, as the results of that wondrous transformation that the English language—because an intensely living tongue—is constantly undergoing.

2. While many words and forms of speech have become *obsolete*, others, yet in use, have so *changed in meaning* that the sense they now convey is widely different—sometimes quite opposite—from that which they imparted at the first. The word "*prevent*" is a very notable example, and unless the old meaning be borne in mind, it will be difficult to understand some passages in which the word occurs. Formerly it meant, as its etymology suggests, "to go before", "to anticipate", "to help"; now it means to *hinder*. When the Psalmist said, "I prevented the dawning of the morning," etc. (Ps. cxix. 147), he intended to convey the idea that he *anticipated* the dawn with his devotions, and not that he *hindered* the morning from dawning. When St. Paul said, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep" (1 Thess. iv. 15), he did not mean that the living should not hinder the dead from rising, but that *after* the dead were raised the living should meet

the Lord, and not *before* the resurrection had taken place. The word "*prevent*" is derived from the Latin *præ-venire* (= to go before); but men who go before others have been so addicted to the habit of hindering those who follow, that the word "*prevent*" has now quite lost its proper etymological sense. And that may remind us that it is the tendency of many words, after the lapse of time, to convey a less noble meaning than they originally bore. Thus the word "*charity*" is now utterly inadequate to express the idea intended by the apostle in the word ἀγάπη (1 Cor. xiii. 3, etc.), that means warm, devoted "*love*", and was the word used by our Lord when He said (John xxi. 15) "Lovest thou me?" (ἀγαπᾷς με). "*Charity*" was once used to indicate what was most earnest and fervid, most warm and loving; now it is often used to denote what is formal and cold, as in the common phrase, "as cold as charity." In many places, if the word "*love*" be put for the word "*charity*", the old and true meaning of the sacred text will be strikingly apparent. Describing the uproar at Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 5), St. Luke speaks of "certain *lewd* fellows of the *baser* sort," a passage that, read in the light of modern meanings of words, plainly teaches that those who made

this riot were men of most corrupt morals, since the word *lewd* now means indecent, immodest, in the direction of licentiousness. But how does the case really stand? The word *lewd* is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *leode*, the people; and was generally applied to the common people, irrespective of moral character; while the word *baser*, from the French *bas*, low, humble, does not necessarily mean worthless or wicked. *Lewd*, therefore, got to signify 'ignorant, unlearned'. "From this it came to have the meaning of 'lay' as opposed to 'clerical'—*lay* in fact springing from the same root," a contrast that may be seen in the following passages:—

"The *leude* man, the grete clerke,  
Shall stonde upon his owne werke."\*

"For if a prest be foul, on whom we truste,  
No wondur is a *lewid* man to ruste."†

The force, then, of the passage in Acts is this, that the Jews stirred up a mob of the common and ignorant people—the "roughs"—of the town: instruments suited to their purpose, as being men whose passions were easily excited; and who, being dull in their perception of nice questions, and unversed in the processes of ratioci

\* Gower, *Conf. Am.*, i., 274.

† Chaucer, *C. T.*, *Proh.*, 504.



nation, would not be readily impressed with the apostle's arguments ;—a trick that is often most unworthily adopted in the present day by noisy opponents of the truth, whose clap-trap *orations*—full of swelling words of vanity—are dexterously suited to rouse the animalism of a mob, the impenetrable bosses of whose ignorance can scarcely be pierced by the polished shaft from the quiver of true knowledge. In Psalm lxvii. 2, occurs the curious phrase “*saving health*.” Now the Saxon word ‘health’ (*hæld*) literally means *whole*, and our word ‘whole’ is derived from it. More frequently the Hebrew word here translated “*saving health*” is rendered “*salvation*”, which means ‘saving us *wholly*’ from the ills that afflict or threaten us. In an older version “*the helmet of salvation*” (Eph. vi. 17) was “*the helmet of health*.” Hence old Hugh Latimer says: “Take also the helmet or head-piece of health, or true health in Jesus Christ ; for there is no health in any other name ; not the health of a grey friar’s coat, nor the health of this pardon or that pardon.” Health, then, means wholeness ; and hence, when Jesus said to the man at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 6), “Wilt thou be made *whole* ?” He meant, “Wilt thou be restored to perfect health ?”

—in other words, “Wilt thou be saved?” It is obvious that from the prescribed limits of this chapter so full an account cannot be given of each of even a very few of the words in our English Bible that have undergone important changes of meaning since the present version was made. It must content us to say less of each, that a larger number of such changes may be indicated. Thus *vex* (Exod. xxii. 21; Acts xii. 1, etc.) once meant ‘to torment, harass, oppress’; it now signifies to irritate by small provocations. *Virtue* (Mark v. 30; Luke vi. 19; 2 Peter i. 5) meant ‘manliness, or that which is excellent in man,’ and hence moral robustness. *Conversation* (Heb. xiii. 5, etc.) once meant ‘general deportment, behaviour,’ and not merely colloquial intercourse. *Ancient* (Isa. iii. 14; Jer. xix. 1, etc.), once a noun signifying ‘an elder,’ is now an adjective applicable to old things and times. *Closet* (Matt. vi. 6), now a large cupboard, was a private apartment, usually a bedroom. (It is derived from the Latin *claudo*, *clausum*; whence *close*, *cloister*.) *Coast* (Matt. viii. 34, etc.), now applied only to the seaside, once was a ‘border,’ or ‘frontier’ generally. *Wit* (Exod. ii. 4), with us a humorous conjunction of incongruous ideas, meant in the

old time knowledge; and "*witty* inventions" (Prov. viii. 21) signifies '*clever* inventions'. *Sober* (2 Cor. v. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2), by us restricted chiefly to one form of temperance, had once the wider meaning of 'grave, discreet, sedate'. *Simple* (Rom. xvi. 19), now used principally in the sense of 'silly, foolish', meant 'artless, guileless'; it is from the Latin *simplex*, which is said to be from *sine plicâ*, i.e., without fold; and so, 'open, un-designing'.\* *Publican* (Matt. v. 46, 47, etc.), a word that came into English with the translation, is from the Latin *publicanus*, one who farms the public taxes. *Painful* (Psalm lxxiii. 16), now applied to physical injuries, had the sense of toilsome, laborious. A 'painful preacher' was a painstaking, laborious minister whose long discourses of two or three hours each would now be *painful* after another fashion to most modern audiences. *Religion* (Acts xxvi. 5; Gal. i. 13; James i. 26) was, "not, as too often now, used as equivalent for godliness; but like *θησκευα*, for which it stands (James i. 27), it expressed the outer form and embodiment which the inward spirit of a true or a false devotion assumed";†.

\* See Trench, "Study of Words," p. 44.

† Trench, "Select Glossary."

and *piety* (1 Tim. v. 4), now applied to devoutness, meant especially *filial affection*. Hence Erasmus ("On the Creed") says, "To the love of God and to the love of our parentes, is gyven one commune name in the Latyne, that is to wyte *pietas*. For *pietas* properly is called the affection or love towardes God and towardes our parentes, and towardes our countre, which is as it were a commune parente of many men, lykewyse as God is the Father of all men." *Purchase* (1 Tim. iii. 5), which now means "to buy", formerly meant to win, to acquire, to obtain, without any restriction as to method. "There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to *purchase* himselfe profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like." \* *Reward* (Deut. xxxii. 41; Psalm liv. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 14) was formerly to requite, or to recompense, without regard to good or evil. *Riot* (Titus i. 6; 1 Peter iv. 4), now applied to the noise and mischief of an ungovernable mob, once was applied, as in the case of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 13), to dissolute or luxurious living. *Replenish* (Gen. i. 28, ix. 1) signified "to fill", not as now "to fill again". A *report* (Acts vi. 3, x. 22; Heb. xi. 2) is now a mere idle rumour as likely to be

\* Bacon, Essay iv., 14.

false as true : it once was limited to fame, reputation, or the spreading of a true thing. *Poll* (Exod. xvi. 16 ; Num. i. 2, 18, 20, 22, etc.) signified a head ; the word still remains in *poll*-tax, or head money, and the *poll* at elections, in which voters are counted by their *polls*, or heads. *Populous* (Deut. xxvi. 5), like the Latin *populosus*, used of nations and armies, meant 'numerous', and was not, as now, confined to cities or countries. *Softly* (Gen. xxxiii. 14 ; Isa. viii. 6) meant gently ; and not, necessarily, without noise. *Sore* (2 Chron. xxi. 19 ; Job ii. 7 ; Psalm ii. 5) signified, as an adjective, "heavy, severe" ; now it is usually applied, as a noun, to a wound causing pain. *Voyage* (Jud. ii. 19), now used of journeys by water only, was once applied to travels by land as well. *Vile* (Jer. xxix. 17 ; Phil. iii. 21 ; James ii. 2) signified cheap, worthless, contemptible ; it has now the sense of moral corruptness. *Venison* (Gen. xxv. 28, xxvii. 3, 5, 7), now applied to flesh of the deer kind, was once used of the flesh of all beasts taken in hunting, game. *Vagabond* (Gen. iv. 12, 14 ; Psalm cix. 10), a wanderer, a fugitive, has acquired a disreputable sense from the character of those to whom it was originally applied.

### 3. To words *obsolete*, and words *whose meanings*

*have changed*, may be added, as among the "peculiar words in the Bible," those whose *spelling* has become antiquated. Many of these which appeared in 1611, in the first edition of the authorized version, have been corrected in subsequent editions; and those that yet remain hardly require to be pointed out to the young Bible student. Yet we may indicate a few. We have *astonied* for astonished; *bewray* for betray; *chaws* for jaws; *causey* for causeway; *cotes* for cots; *crudle* for curdle; *sope* for soap; *tentation* for temptation; *fat* for vat; *fitch* for vetch; *defenced* for fenced; *marish* for marsh; *magnifical* for magnificent; *knop* for knob; *garner* for granery; *sherd* for shred; *passages* for passes; *ummoveable* for immoveable; and many more. Yet, odd as these things seem to us, necessitated though they be by the inevitable laws of progress, the present translation is for us a wonderful advantage over those of former times. Two hundred years farther back we find Wycliffe using words that would be utterly incomprehensible to many English readers, though some of them might be more readily understood by our neighbours north of the Tweed. The Scotch still use *oker* for interest, and *orison* for oration, and *aimery* for a press or cupboard, and *sad* for firm or solid,

and *tolbooth* for a place to receive taxes, and *toun* for farm, and *scarry* for precipitous, and *repe* for a handful of corn straw, and *forleit* for left altogether. But *we* should need a glossary to explain such passages as "He seith a man sythyng in a *tolbothe*, Matheu by name" (Matt. ix. 9). "The first saide, I have bouchte a *toun*, and I have nede to go out and se it" (Luke xiv. 19). "Whanne thou repest corn in the feeld, and forgetist and *leevest* a *repe*, thou schalt not turn agen to take it" (Deut. xxiv. 19).\*

And yet, such has been the growth of popular education, such the facilities for Bible study afforded even to the very young, such the unconscious reception, by means of popular treatises and lectures, of the results of diligent research and scholarly investigation, that the diction of the Bible "is even now scarcely further removed from the current phraseology of life and books than it was two hundred years since. The subsequent movement of the English speech has not been in a right line of recession from the scriptural dialect. It has rather been a curve of revolution around it. Were it not carrying the metaphor too far, I would say it is an elliptical curve, and that the speech of England

\* See "Book of Days," Chambers, i. 57.

has now been brought by it nearer to that great solar centre, that focus of genial warmth and cheerful light, than it was a century ago, when hundreds of words in its vocabulary, now as familiar as the alphabet, were complained of as strange or obsolete. In fact, the English Bible sustains, and always has sustained to the general English tongue, the position of a treatise upon a special knowledge, requiring, like any branch of science, a special nomenclature and phraseology. The language of the law, for example, in both vocabulary and structure, differs widely from that of unprofessional life; the language of medicine, of metaphysics, of astronomy, of chemistry, of mechanical art,—all these have their appropriate idioms, very diverse from the speech which is the common heritage of all. Why, then, should theology, the highest of knowledges, alone be required to file her tongue to the vulgar utterance, when every other human interest has its own appropriate expression, while no man thinks of conforming to a standard that, because it is too common, can hardly be other than unclean?"\*

Meanwhile, without waiting for any authorized version of the present version, let the young Bible

\* Marsh, "Lectures on the English Language," p. 449.



student earnestly pursue his researches into the word-lore of Scripture, remembering that the "letter killeth" only as it is misunderstood; and that the "spirit giveth life" only as the true force of the letter is discovered and applied. And let him not think that this is a mere "question of words," but of such "*words*" as, when rightly known and felt, do by their "*entrance*" into the heart and mind "*give light*;" the utterances even of the eternal *Word*—the great Teacher Himself—who said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."



## VIII.

**OBSCURE CUSTOMS MENTIONED OR RE-  
FERRED TO IN THE BIBLE.**



## VIII.

### *OBSCURE CUSTOMS MENTIONED OR REFERRED TO IN THE BIBLE.*

O say that a "knowledge of the manners and customs of the Jews is of great service in interpreting Scripture," is to indicate but very faintly the close connection between that knowledge and the elucidation of many portions of the word of God. Add to the customs and manners of the *Jews*, those of the Greeks and Romans, those also of the Arabians, of the Persians, and of other Oriental peoples; then assert that a knowledge of the manners and customs of these nations is an indispensable pre-requisite for the understanding of the Bible, and something much nearer to the whole truth on this matter will then be said. Written by, and primarily for, those with whom these customs were familiar things, it is not surprising that so much should be said of them in the way of barest allusion, and few explanations should be given concerning them. This circumstance is, indeed, regarded as one internal evi-

dence, among many, of the antiquity and genuineness of the sacred writings. Had they been composed in times comparatively modern, they would not have contained even bare allusions to matters not then fully understood ; while it is but natural to conclude that manners and customs less obscure and better known in such later times would have been enlarged upon with a very suspicious minuteness of detail. It is only within modern times that the East has yielded its ample stores of information on, and illustrations of, these subjects. Many are the reasons why it has not done so before ; many, also, why it has done so since. Into these we may not enter. Suffice it to say that the explorations of the traveller, the labours of the missionary, the enterprise of the merchant, the ambition of the conqueror, the patient researches of the antiquarian, together with those of the oriental and classical scholar, have resulted in the accumulation of an immense mass of information on this subject. No doubt a spur to these investigations in many quarters has been furnished—unintentionally, of course—by the blatant assertions and covert inuendoes of avowed antagonists and ill-masked traitors to the word of life. While classical writings and remains sufficiently preserve the records of life

and manners among the ancient nations of southern Europe, men have been greatly aided in their pursuit of these studies as they relate to the Jews and other Bible peoples, by the stereotyped condition of society as we find it in southern and western Asia at this day. Well has Dr. Stanley said that "every English pilgrim to the Holy Land, even the most reverential and the most fastidious, is delighted to trace and to record the likeness of patriarchal manners and customs in the Arabian chiefs. To refuse to do so would be to decline the use of what we may almost call a singular gift of Providence. The unchanged habits of the East render it in this respect a kind of living Pompeii. The outward appearances which, in the case of the Greeks and Romans, we know only through art and writing, through marble, fresco, and parchment, in the case of Jewish history we know through the forms of actual men, living and moving before us, wearing almost the same garb, speaking in almost the same language, and certainly with the same general terms of speech and tone and manners."<sup>\*</sup>

1. One who is familiar with the Bible can hardly travel far in any Oriental country without meeting with illustrations of manners and customs mentioned

"Jewish Church," I. 11.

in the Scriptures, some of which are very curious and instructive. Thus, in Barbary, where, says Dr. Kitto, the simple ancient customs of the Jews "are perhaps better preserved than in many other parts," Mr. Urquhart noticed an incident at a Jewish wedding which both reminded him of, and interpreted, a passage in the Book of Ruth. "I was standing," he says, "beside the bridegroom when the bride entered; and, as she crossed the threshold, *he stooped down and slipped off his shoe*, and struck her with the heel on the nape of the neck."\* The bride was thus reminded by this *striking* custom that she had passed under the authority of another; and the shoe is here "used in sign of the obedience of the wife and the supremacy of the husband." The passage in Ruth (iv. 7) on which, in this way, light was thrown, refers to the shoe as the emblem of authority or proprietorship. When "a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour," it was a sign that he parted with his right. In many Eastern countries the shoe is a symbol of authority. In the regalia of Morocco is a pair of embroidered slippers, which "used to be carried before the Sultan, as among us the sceptre, or sword of state."

\* "Pillars of Hercules," i. 305.

Mr. Roberts,\* when travelling in the East, noticed that "an affectionate widow never parts with her late husband's shoes. They are placed near her when she sleeps; she kisses them and puts her head upon them; and nearly every time after bathing she goes to look at them." They are a perpetual memento to her of the *protection* that she has lost. The Highland custom of striking a bride with an old slipper "for good luck," and the custom, still kept up in many parts, of casting a slipper after the newly wedded pair, may have been in some way derived from the custom referred to in the Book of Ruth, and which was itself founded upon an ancient law (Deut. xxv. 7, 9).

Within the memory of some yet living, the peasantry of Ireland, of the Isle of Man, and of the Scottish Highlands were accustomed, on the 1st of May, to kindle fires on the tops of hills. It was the last relic of the custom called *Beltein*, observed by the barbarous Celtic populations of Europe, and supposed, with some show of reason, to have been derived from the worship of Baal, or the sun. None of those who so recently kept up *Beltein* thought of its origin, or could say more in its defence than may be offered in apology for

• "Oriental Illustrations."



many another custom "more honoured in the breach than in the observance," that it is "a reason for irrational things, and an excuse for inexcusable ones."

2. Another form connected with covenants and contracts, called "*striking hands*," has maintained its ground among civilized nations down to the present time. Both the Greeks and the Romans practised it (see *Iliad*, ii. 341, and *Æneid*, iv. 597). Solomon often alludes to this mode of confirming a bargain, showing that it was common with the Jews (Prov. vi. 1, xvii. 18, xxii. 26). The custom may be traced in ages long anterior to the time of the wise man, for Job himself alludes to it (xvii. 3); we have an instance also in the history of Jehu (2 Kings x. 15). In Ockley's history of the Saracens we have another striking instance, which is quoted by Calmet. Telha, just before he died, asked one of Ali's men if he belonged to the Emperor of the Faithful; and being informed that he did, "Give me then," said he, "your hand, that I may put mine in it, and by this action renew the oath of fidelity which I have already made to Ali." Another example is supplied by Mr. Bruce, the traveller. "I was so enraged," says he, "at the traitorous part which Hassan had acted, that, at parting, I could not help

saying to Ibrahim, ' Now, sheikh, I have done everything you have desired, without ever expecting fee or reward ; the only thing I now ask you, and it is probably the last, is that you revenge me upon this Hassan, who is every day in your power.' Upon this *he gave me his hand*, saying, ' He shall not die in his bed, or I shall never see old age.' " Amongst us, also, it is a very common thing when two persons have made a bargain, for the transaction to be sealed by one of the parties saying to the other, " Give me your hand upon it."

3. A knowledge of some of the customs relating to the *beard* will be found to throw light upon many scriptures whose force does not at once appear. Let it be understood that, from time immemorial, the beard has been regarded by Oriental peoples with the profoundest respect. In the mountains of Yemen, where strangers are seldom seen, it is a disgrace to appear shaven. Among the Arabians it is more infamous for any one to have his beard cut off, than among us to be publicly whipped or branded with a hot iron. Many in that country would prefer death to such a punishment. Hence the shaving off half their beards by Hanun (2 Sam. x. 4) is mentioned as an equally gross affront with the other indignities offered to the ambassadors of

David, and only to be answered by an appeal to arms; and in the same spirit, in the year 1764, a Persian emir having cut off the beard of an officer sent to demand his tribute, Kerim Khan marched against him with a large army, and conquered all his country (*Niebuhr*). This great reverence for the beard will explain how it was that the dishonour done by David to his beard, of letting his spittle fall on it (1 Sam. xxi. 13), seems at once to have convinced Achish of his being insane, as no man in health of body and mind would defile what was esteemed so honourable. Hence, also, we may perceive the meaning of Mephibosheth's neglect, in his not trimming his beard (2 Sam. xix. 24). So great is the regard of the Arabians for the beard, that the wives kiss the husbands' and the children their fathers' beards when they salute them. And when two friends meet, they thus salute each other (*D'Aurieux*). This will explain 2 Sam. xx. 9, which, literally translated, would read, "And Joab held in his right hand the beard of Amasa, that he might give it a kiss." Burckhardt, in his *Materials for a History of the Wahabys*, relates an anecdote which strongly illustrates the force of Arabian feeling on this point. "Saoud had long been desirous to purchase the mare of a sheikh

belonging to the tribe of Beni-Shammar, but the owner refused to sell her for any sum of money. At this time a sheikh of the Kahtan Arabs had been sentenced to lose his beard for some offence. When the barber produced his razor in the presence of Saoud, the sheikh exclaimed, 'O Saoud, take the mare of Shammary as a ransom for my beard!' The punishment was remitted; the sheikh was allowed to go and bargain for the mare, which cost him 2,500 dollars, the owner declaring that no consideration could have induced him to part with her, had it not been to save the beard of a noble Kahtany (*quoted by Kitto*). The same traveller observes that the Arabs who had the misfortune to incur this disgrace invariably concealed themselves from view until their beards grew again. It was probably, therefore, on this account, to save them from public scorn, that David permitted his half-shaven ambassadors to tarry at Jericho until their beards were grown (2 Sam. x. 5).

4. While a fine head of hair was esteemed a great ornament (2 Sam. xiv. 26; Cant. v. 11), baldness was a source of contempt. In the East, the falling off of the hair is known to be sometimes, and in connection with other symptoms, a strong

criterion of leprosy ; and there actually is a particular kind of leprosy limited either to the fore or hind part of the head. It became necessary to provide that if no other symptom of leprosy than mere baldness occurred, the person was not to be suspected of being a leper. Indeed, the Hebrew word for baldness (*kareach*) means, etymologically, *one who has boils*, and therefore, originally, perhaps, a leper. These regulations will be better understood from the fact that the Orientals distinguish two sorts of baldness ; the first is that which begins from the forehead, and the other that which begins behind. The Hebrew has a distinct name for each of these. By the Arabian poets, also, the former is distinguished as the "noble baldness," because it generally proceeded from the wearing of a helmet ; while the latter was stigmatized as "servile baldness." With this understanding let us read the terms "bald"—*kareach* (Lev. xiii. 40), and "forehead-bald"—*gibbeach*, in the next verse. It may be noted that when the youths of Bethlehem called after Elisha, "Go up, thou baldhead" (2 Kings ii. 23), they used the word *kareach*, *i.e.* the term of reproach ;\* implying that he was a leper, unclean, and should therefore be thrust out of

\* See Michaelis, iii. 283.

society ; and further, that, since leprosy was regarded as "the stroke of God," it was mere presumption on his part to profess to be a prophet of the Most High. Some, however, think that the baldness of Elisha arose from the custom of shaving the head as a sign of mourning (Job i. 20). This seems to be the view of Dr. Stanley ; \* and certainly the recent loss of Elijah, followed by the rending of his own clothes (2 Kings ii. 12), another mourning custom, lends some probability to this opinion, notwithstanding Dr. Kitto inclines to the former view.† The epithet "*baldhead*," whatever its origin, "was a term of contempt, equivalent to calling him a mean and unworthy fellow—a social outcast. In this sense it is still employed as a term of abuse in the further East, and as such is often applied to men whose heads are well covered with hair." ‡ "In viewing this subject," says Mr. Roberts, "does not the mind naturally revert to the baldheaded Samson, bereft of his strength, and made the sport of the lords of the Philistines? Would such an event as that soon be forgotten? Is it not likely that the extreme folly of Samson

\* "Lectures on Jewish Church," second series, 324.

† "Daily Bible Illustrations," iv. 282.

‡ Roberts, "Oriental Illustrations," 214.

in disclosing the secret of his strength, would give rise to such an epithet? When was Samson killed? About A.M. 2884. When was Elisha mocked? In A.M. 3108, which makes it only 224 years after the event. Samson was a servant of the true God (Heb. xi. 32); those who conquered him in consequence of his bald head were heathens. Elisha was a servant of the true God; those who applied the epithet to him were also heathens; who were 'going up into Bethel,' which has been called 'the mother-city of idolatry.' Some young heathen 'lads' met the servant of the Lord, and mocked him, saying, - "Go up, thou bald-head! go up, thou baldhead!" As did thy master Elijah, so do thou, go up to heaven.' The spirit of this is in excellent keeping with modern heathenism; and it is the way in which they show their contempt for those who are weak and for those servants of the true God among them who now labour for their conversion to Christianity. Hence the epithet has been often applied to Christian missionaries: 'What can those baldheads do?'

5. We refer to another custom, which can hardly be called *obscure*, because of the signification it gives to one of the titles of the Lord. According to the Levirate law (Lev. xxv. 25—48), if a man had

become poor, and had been compelled to sell his inheritance, he still retained the right of buying it back—that is, of redeeming it; but if he continued poor, and unable to buy it back, then his next of kin, if rich enough, might buy it back for him. He who thus bought back the inheritance was called the “*gôel*.” This was the word used by Job (xix. 25) when he said, “I know that my redeemer liveth.” The Book of Ruth contains a very interesting account of the practice of redeeming a lost inheritance as it existed among the Jews. In ch. ii. 20, it is stated that Boaz was a near kinsman to Ruth; but Boaz himself acknowledges (iii. 12) that there is a kinsman still nearer than himself. When, therefore, the time came for Boaz to rebuy Ruth’s property, he first challenged the nearer relation, promising that, if he declined to exercise the kinsman’s right, he himself would do so (iv. 1—11). The words “*redeem*,” “*redeemer*,” “*redemption*”—“to buy back,” “one who buys back,” “the act of buying back”—from the Latin *re-dimo* (*re*, back; and *emo*, *emptum*, to buy) represent several different words, both Hebrew and Greek, in the Scriptures. The Hebrew word *gôal*, with its particle *gôel*, signifies to ransom something, as a field sold, by paying back the price; and Christ



is our gôel, our near kinsman, our elder brother, who has purchased back the heavenly inheritance into the human family. The words in the New Testament used regarding the glorious matter of man's redemption all signify the obtaining of something by paying a proper price for it. Sometimes the simple verb ἀγοράζω, *to buy*, is used; so the redeemed are said to be bought unto God by the blood of Christ, and to be bought from the earth, and to be bought from among men, and to be bought with a price; that is, with the price of Christ's blood (1 Cor. vi. 20). Hence the Church of God is said to be purchased with it (Acts xx. 28). Sometimes the compound word ἐξαγοράζω is used, which signifies *to buy again*, or out of the hands of another, as the redeemed are bought out of the hands of justice (Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5). In other places λυτρόω is used, or other words derived from it, which signifies the deliverance of a slave or captive from thralldom by paying the ransom price for him; so the saints are said to be redeemed, not with silver or gold, the usual ransom, but with a far greater one, the blood and life of Christ, which He came into this world to give as a ransom price for many, and even Himself, which is ἀντὶ λυτρον, an answerable, adequate, and full price for them (1 Peter i. 18)

It was the well-known custom of buying back a forfeited possession that gave such force to words redeemer, redeem, redemption, when their equivalents were first employed in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in relation to Jesus Christ and His glorious work.

A knowledge of the customs referred to in the New Testament—some of which were peculiar to the Greeks and Romans—is specially useful in elucidating the meaning of many passages that would otherwise be obscure, and in giving force to many terms that would not otherwise be fully understood. As examples, take the following :—

1. In Gal. iii. 24, 25, we read of a *schoolmaster*. The Greek word is *παιδαγωγός*, whence we have the word *pedagogue* (literally, boy-leader), which with us signifies *schoolmaster*—in the strict sense of the word, as an “instructor of youth.” But the *pedagogue* was not, save in a very limited sense, a *schoolmaster*. He was usually a slave, sometimes a freedman, to whose care the boys of a family were committed, who trained them up, instructed them at home, and accompanied them to the public school (*Robinson*). His work as instructor was limited to the rehearsing of the lessons learned at school, to examining into what had been already

imparted, and to prepare the scholar for the true schoolmaster. As a *boy-leader*, he had to *lead the boys to school*. When this is understood, it will be seen how the law is not so much a schoolmaster, finishing our education, giving us final lessons to prepare us for the business of life, but simply a leader or guide, conducting us to Christ, who is our true *Master, Magister, Doctor*. He is our true Schoolmaster, teaching us the truth of God, not making void the law, but magnifying it, and making it honourable. The pedagogue would show the scholar how the principles and rules he learned at school were to be applied in the practice of home duties, and the scholar would learn to understand those principles, and to value them as he applied them to his relations as son and heir. So Jesus says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). In proportion as we obey the law of God, and enjoy the fruit of obedience, shall we be *led* to an understanding and appreciation of the teachings of the great Teacher; hence as scholars we mind the pedagogue, so shall we be led nearer to Christ in thought, will, endeavour; and His higher lessons will be the more clear as we daily practise what the *moral law* enjoins.

There is another sense, self-evident, in which the *ceremonial law* led, through types and shadow, up to Jesus, the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." On this we need not expatiate.

2. In Rom. vii. 24,\* there seems to be an allusion to another obscure practice. Even if the apostle does not, as some think, refer to it, it may at least convey a vivid idea and illustration of his meaning, that he felt sin to be a nauseous, intolerable, and fatal burden. The Romans sometimes compelled a captive to be joined face to face with a dead body, and to bear it about until the horrible effluvia destroyed the life of the living victim. Of this atrocious practice, one of the most remarkable instances is that mentioned by Virgil when describing the tyrannous conduct of Mezentius :—

"What words can paint those execrable times ?

\* \* \* \* \*

The living and the dead, at his command,  
Were coupled face to face and hand to hand,  
Till, choked with stench, in loathed embraces tied,  
The lingering wretches pined away and died."

*Dryden's Trans. Æneid, vii.*

Doddridge paraphrases the latter half of this verse thus : "Who shall rescue me, miserable captive

\* For the exegesis of this passage, the Bible student will do well to consult Oldshouse, *in loc.*

as I am, from the body of this death—from this continual burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious as a dead carcase tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes.” He explains, in a note, “It is well known that some ancient writers mention this as a cruelty practised by some tyrants upon miserable captives who fell into their hands ; and a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented cannot surely enter into the mind of man.” “Doddridge,” says Kitto, “is not by any means singular in his opinion that the apostle derives an allusion from this horrid punishment, although perhaps the text is sufficiently intelligible without the illustration it thus receives. Philo, in an analogous passage, more obviously alludes to it, describing the body as a burden to the soul, carried about like a dead carcase, which may not till death be laid aside.”

3. In reference to the privileges—present and prospective—of Christians, St. Paul (Rom. viii. 15, 23 ; Gal. iv. 5 ; Eph. i. 5) uses an expression (*υιοθεσια*) metaphorically, with which, by the translation “*adoption*,” we are all familiar. This term literally means “*placing as a son*.” The apostle doubtless alludes to the Roman custom of adop-

tion, by which a person, not having children of his own, might *adopt* as his son one born of other parents. This was a formal act, effected either by the process called *adrogatio*, when the person to be adopted was independent of his parent, or by *adoptio*,\* specifically so called when in the power of his parent. "The effect of it was that the adopted child was entitled to the name and *sacra privata* of his new father, and ranked as his heir-at-law; while the father, on his part, was entitled to the property of the son, and exercised towards him all the rights and privileges of a father. In short, the relationship was to all intents and purposes the same as existed between a natural father and son. The selection of a person to be adopted implied a decided preference and love on the part of the adopter; and St. Paul aptly transfers the well-known feeling and customs connected with the act to illustrate the position of the Christianized Jew or Gentile." On adoption, Flavell has well said, "Betwixt civil and sacred adoption there is a twofold agreement and disagreement. They agree in this, that both flow from the pleasure and good-will of the adoptant; and in this, that both confer a right of privileges which we have not

\* See Smith's "Dict. of Gk. and Rom. Antiq.," art. *Adoptio*.

by nature: but in this they differ—one is an act imitating nature, the other transcends nature; the one was found out for the comfort of them that had no children, the other for the comfort of them that had no father. Divine adoption is in Scripture either taken properly for that act or sentence of God by which we are made sons, or for the privileges with which the adopted are invested. We lost our inheritance by the fall of Adam; we receive it by the death of Christ, which restores it again to us by a new and better title.” Thus the difference between human and Divine adoption is succinctly put by another writer (*Bowes*): “1. Men generally adopt when they have no children of their own; but God had a Son, His dear Son, His well-beloved Son; He had angels. 2. Men generally adopt such as they think deserving; God adopts criminals, traitors, enemies. 3. Men adopt living children; God, those that are by nature spiritually dead. 4. Man generally adopts one only; God adopts many.”

Thus have we in this chapter treated of some of the customs alluded to in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. This we have done, not with the remotest pretence of exhausting a subject on which many learned volumes have been composed, but

with the hope of giving to the earnest young Bible student some idea, however faint, of the great importance of a knowledge of the manners and customs of the East and of the past for him who would understand the beauty and see the force of many passages in the word of God which cannot, in the absence of that knowledge, be so distinctly intelligible. He who carries to the reading of his Bible some acquaintance with these matters in his memory will find that many a dark saying is full of light, and many a passage, otherwise hard to be understood, is pregnant with, to him, a new truth, and force, and beauty.







## **IX.**

### **REMARKABLE PREDICTIONS IN THE BIBLE.**



## IX.

### *REMARKABLE PREDICTIONS IN THE BIBLE.*



**W**HAT, indeed, can be more remarkable than prophecy and its fulfilment? An event is foretold, which, in its nature, and in the time of its occurrence, is beyond all human calculation and foresight; long before the event takes place the prophecy is known; the accomplishment of the prediction is brought about “without an intentional regard to the Divine purpose on the part of the agent;” yet the event answers as exactly to the prediction as do the letters on this page to the type of which they are the impression. Can any evidence of the source of Scripture be stronger than the correspondence—with these accompanying conditions—between the prophecy and its accomplishment? “If prudence could have *foreseen* the result, the prediction may be but an instance of human sagacity. If the result was not *foretold*, there is no prophetic evidence. And if the prediction led men to seek its fulfilment, the fulfilment

is the result of human contrivance.”\* But these conditions, need ul to constitute prophetic evidence, concur in the prophecies of the word of God; hence prophecy has been well termed “a miracle of knowledge.”

There is also one other remarkable and characteristic feature of the prophecies of the Bible. What Dr. Arnold said of all Scripture is as true of prophecy as of any other part of the word of God; it “is practical, and intended to minister to our improvement rather than to our curiosity.” “In the prophetic Scriptures this peculiarity is equally obvious. They are all either intensely moral, or evangelical, or both. It might have been otherwise, without injury to prophecy as an outward evidence of Scripture. The gift of prediction and of moral teaching might have been disjoined; but in fact they are not: what might have ministered to the gratification of natural curiosity only, is enlisted on the side of practical holiness. The prophet is the teacher, and the history of the future (which prophecy is) becomes, like the history of the past, the handmaid of evangelical truth and of spiritual improvement.” Of the intention of prophecy to be a moral instructor, rather than a solver of curious

\* Angus.

inquiries, we have a striking example in the conversation of our Lord with Peter (John xxi. 18—23). That apostle,—the accomplishment of whose predicted denial of his Master, as well as of the foretold treachery of Judas, must have prepared him to regard, as of inevitable fulfilment, any prophecy from the same infallible source,—was warned as to his own future; but along with the prophecy went the lesson, “Follow Me.” Peter’s curiosity concerning the future of another of the apostles is excited, and he inquires respecting John, “And what *shall* this man *do*?” Jesus saw the motive that urged the question, and, though He knew the future of John as perfectly as of Peter, He declines the exercise of prophetic power unless it can be subordinated to some great moral purpose. Hence His reply was, “What is that to thee? follow thou Me.” And the very next verse admonishes us that the reproof of a too curious spirit should not be wrested into the delivery of a prediction.

Keeping in mind, then, these two things (1) The *conditions*, and (2) the *moral purpose* of prophecy, let us glance at some of the predictions which are recorded in the Bible.

I. Some of its most remarkable prophecies relate to *nations*.

1. Let us take that very prominent Bible country, JUDÆA, "the Land of Promise," a country that was afterwards ranked by Greeks and Romans among their finest provinces; a land dotted with cities, and crowded with villages, and whose fruits outrivalled those of Italy; a land called by the Greeks a garden, and described in the Bible as "a land flowing with milk and honey." Concerning this country let the prophecies contained in the following passages be carefully read:—Lev. xxvi. 31—35; Isa. i. 7; xxiv. 1—12; xxxix. 9—14; Jer. iv. 20, 26—28; xii. 7—13; Ezek. xii. 19, 20; these passages being but a few of many in which the present state of the land was accurately portrayed many generations before the state of things so minutely described had actually come to pass. Compare, then, the prophetic picture with the facts of history, and with what eye-witnesses have beheld. Successively overrun by Chaldeans, Egyptians, Romans, it was afterwards laid waste by Mohammedans, by several civil wars, was the great battlefield of the crusaders, who contended for the possession of its ruins, amid which at this day reside a wretched mongrel population of Turks and Arabs and poverty-stricken Jews, whose clamours for *backshish* would have been deemed impossible by the subjects of that

king who had made silver to be plentiful in Jerusalem as the stones of the street. All travellers describe this once favoured, wealthy, mighty, and populous country as a field of ruins without roads, inns, or conveyances; inhabited by a scanty population of sad, ill-fed, and ill-governed people. If at some time that famous "traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's," some one may be disposed to suggest that Macaulay's \* "Review of Ranke's History of the Popes," should it survive to that

\* Macaulay used the same image in the concluding passage of a review of Mitford's *Greece* (1824), and again in his review of Mill's *Essay on Government* (1829). But it was not original. Volney (*Ruins*, chap. ii.) says, "Who knows but that hereafter some traveller like myself will sit down upon the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the *Zuyder Zee*, where now, in the tumult of enjoyment, the heart and the eyes are too slow to take in the multitude of sensations? Who knows but he will sit down solitary amid silent ruins, and weep a people inurned, and their greatness changed into an empty name?" The same idea had previously occurred to Horace Walpole (*Letter to Mason*, Nov. 24, 1774): "At last some curious traveller from Lima will visit England, and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul's, like the editions of Baalbec and Palmyra." Both Kirke White (*Time*), and Shelley (*Dedication to Peter Bell*) employed the same idea before Macaulay's New Zealander was heard of.



remote period, may set up a rival claim to inspiration. This, however, will have to be remembered, that Macaulay and Volney, etc., had only predicted something similar to what had already happened in the history of nations. They spoke of historic possibilities, not of predetermined events. Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were not writing amongst the "*ruins of empires*;" their eyes had not rested on dismantled capitals such as to the modern writer were suggestive of the possible decay of London. In their time, the great empires of the eastern world were in the full tide of their life, and giving no evidence of decline; while of those of the west, Greece only received the Phœnician letters from Cadmus (B.C. 1493) two years before Moses led the Israelites out of the "house of bondage;" and Rome was not founded when Isaiah wrote, and was only building its port—Ostia—when Jeremiah foretold the seventy years' captivity. The inspired prophets had no historic precedent for the pictures they were limning. But let us return. Bishop Newton and Dr. Graves have shown at great length how fully accomplished are the striking predictions relative to the Jews that are contained in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, of which, to specify a few particulars: "Moses fore-

told that they should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, scattered among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other, find no ease or rest, be oppressed and crushed alway, be left few in number among the heathen, pine away in their iniquity in their enemy's land, and become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword unto all nations." How literally all this has been fulfilled, is matter of common observation and of universal history. The student will also do well to consult, and compare with their fulfilment, the following predictions: Lev. xxvi. 33, 36—39, 44; Deut. iv. 27; Jer. xv. 4; xvi. 13; ix. 16; xxiv. 9, 10; xv. 7; xxix. 18; Ezra v. 10; xii. 15; vii. 19; Isa. lvii. 17; Amos ix. 9; Jer. viii. 3; Hos. ix. 17; Isa. vi. 10—12; Amos ix. iv; Jer. xlvi. 28; Hos. iii. 4, 5; and also to remember that in their prosperity Isaiah foretold their captivity; and in their captivity, when threatened with destruction, and when ten tribes had already disappeared, Jeremiah predicted their deliverance (xxx. 10, 11; xxxiii. 25, 26; xlvi. 27, 28).

2. Take as another example the prophecies relating to EDOM. That Edom was at one time a great nation is proved by the ruins of thirty towns within three days' journey from the Red Sea.

Having applied themselves to commerce and agriculture, and obtained possession of the sea in their part of the Arabian Gulf, they were reduced to subjection by the conquering arms of David, who placed garrisons in their country (2 Sam. viii. 14), and celebrated his victory in two of his Psalms (lx. 8, cviii. 9): and subsequently Joab is said, during his six months' campaign, to have cut off every male in Edom (1 Kings xi. 16). Thus was fulfilled that part of the prophecy of Isaac, which said that Esau should serve his brother (Gen. xxvii. 40), and that remarkable prediction of Balaam respecting the future glory of Jacob (Num. xxiv. 18). In after times the Edomites revolted from Judah (2 Kings viii. 22), regained their liberty and importance, and hence the latter part of the prophecy was fulfilled, that Esau should break the yoke of Jacob from off his neck (Gen. xxvii. 40). Still the old animosity never slept. Edom rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian conqueror, and the calamities of the Israelites (Obad. 12—14); and in the fatal day of Jerusalem they cried, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). For this they were reprov'd (Ezek. xxxv. 15), and ultimately destroyed (Isa. xxiv. 11; Jer xlix. 7—22). So

utterly had Edom perished, that it was not till the time of Buckhardt that the present existing proofs of the fulfilment of the prophetic denunciation were discovered. The old inhospitality which was first the sin of Edom (Num. xx. 18) seems to have become its punishment (Isa. xxxiv. 10); many had tried to explore the region (as Seetzen, Joliffe, Heniker, etc.), but had signally failed. At length Buckhardt (1811), under the name of Sheikh Ibrahim, and in the guise of a poor Arab, succeeded in obtaining, with great difficulty and danger, a hasty glimpse of the wonderful valley of Petra, which exceeded all that the Arab rumours had promised, and at once cleared away all the clouds and difficulties which had hitherto involved the Divine denunciations against Edom. Irby and Mangles, with their retinue, were forced to return, though protected by powerful Arab chiefs; and only after repeated efforts (1818) did they succeed in penetrating to the city of Petra. Once famous for knowledge (Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8), the present inhabitants look upon the ruins as the work of spirits (Isa. xxxiv. 19), and Keith says that "the Arabs are afraid to enter it, or conduct any within its borders."

3. *Arabia* is another land whose wandering tribes

remind us of one of the most striking of the prophecies of Scripture, and its literal accomplishment. Carefully study the terms of the predictions contained in Gen. xvi. 10—12; xvii. 20; and xxv. 12—18; and compare those prophecies with the known history of the Arabs, and with their condition and character at this day. It was said of Ishmael, their great progenitor, "*He will be a wild man*" (Gen. xvi. 12), or, literally, "*a wild ass-man*," that is to say, as wild as a wild ass; and the account of that animal in Job xxxix. 5—8, affords the best possible description of the wandering, lawless, and freebooting lives and manners of the Arabs. "From the commencement of the Ishmaelites to the present day they have maintained their independency; and if there were no other argument to evince the Divine origin of the Pentateuch, the account of Ishmael, and the prophecy concerning his descendants, collated with their history and manner of life during a period of nearly four thousand years, would be sufficient; it may indeed be pronounced absolutely demonstrative." \*

4. The same precision in the accomplishment of prophecy may be noticed in the cases of *Egypt* (Ezek. xxix. 10, 15; xxx. 6, 12, 13), of *Ethiopia*

\* Horne.

(Nah. iii. 8—10), and other nations of antiquity. Indeed, so exactly does the history of the *four great monarchies* correspond with the prophecies of Daniel (ii. 39, 40 ; vii. 17—24 ; viii. and ix.) that the celebrated infidel Porphyry (A.D. 233—304) could only evade the force of their evidence by declaring, contrary to all evidence, that they were written long after the events ; “ which is as absurd as if any one should maintain that the works of Virgil were not written under Augustus, but after his time ; for the Book of Daniel was as public, as widely dispersed, and as universally received as any book could ever possibly be.”

II. Leaving the remarkable predictions relating to nations, let us now consider two or three respecting some of the famous cities of the Bible.

1. Few of the cities of the past were, in their way, more flourishing and wealthy than the celebrated *Tyre*. The Hebrew prophets, being commanded to foretell its overthrow, on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants, delivered their predictions with great minuteness and circumstantiality (see Isa. xxiii. ; Jer. xxv. ; Ezek. xxvi.—xxviii. ; Amos i. 9, 10 ; Zech. ix. 1—8 ; Joel iii. 4—8). That these predictions have been literally accomplished, let the present state of this once famous city bear

witness. Concerning that state Dr. Thomson \* thus writes : " It (an insignificant village) is all that remains of her. But weep not for Tyre ; this very silence and repose are most eloquent and emphatic on themes of the last importance to the Christian faith. There is nothing here of that which led Joshua to call it ' the strong city,' more than three thousand years ago (Josh. xix. 29); nothing of that mighty metropolis which baffled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and all his power for thirteen years, until every head in his army was bald, and every shoulder peeled in the hard service against Tyrus (Ezek. xxix. 18); nothing in this wretched roadstead and empty markets to remind one of the times when merry mariners did sing in her markets; no visible trace of those towering ramparts which so long resisted the utmost efforts of the great Alexander ; all have vanished like a troubled dream. But the Christian would not have it otherwise. The very veracity of Jehovah stands pledged, or seems to be, to keep it so (Ezek. xxvi. 3—5). As she now is, and has long been, Tyre is God's witness ; but, great, powerful, and populous, she would be the infidel's boast. This, however, she cannot, will not, be. Tyre will never rise from her dust to falsify the

\* "The Land and the Book," 177.

voice of prophecy. Nor can I make any lamentation for her; she is a greater blessing to the world now, than in the day of her highest prosperity." \* The entire overthrow of this famous city recalls the lines of Howitt :—

" Ere long came on a traveller, slowly paced;  
Now east, now west, he turned with curious eye,  
Like one perplexed with an uncertainty.  
Awhile he looked upon the sea, and then  
Upon a book, as if it might supply  
The thing he lacked; he read, and gazed again;  
Yet, as if unbelief so on him wrought,  
He might not deem that shore the shore he sought."

2. *Nineveh* affords another example of a remarkable prophecy and its fulfilment. Consider what is well known of the history, condition, and *character* of this "exceeding great city," and then compare the following prophecies with its present state (Nah. i. 8, 10; ii. 6—9; iii. 13—17; Zeph. ii. 13—15), and remember that Zephaniah wrote one hundred years after Nahum, and fifty years before the event he predicted, when as yet there were no signs of decay in that empire city of the East. "The account of the prophet," says Dr. Angus, "when compared with the narrative of the historian (Diodorus Siculus), reading more like history than

\* See also Robinson, *Bib. Res.* ii. 463 ff.



prophecy. Lucian, who flourished in 200 A.D., and was a native of that region, affirms that it had utterly perished, and there was no footstep of it remaining." For many years the very site of it was unknown, and only latterly have the researches of Layard and Botta made the frequenters of some European museums familiar with a few of the relics of this vast metropolis of ancient Assyria, exhumed from "an extended waste, interspersed sparingly with heaps of rubbish."

3. *Babylon* also furnishes another instance. One hundred and sixty years before its overthrow, Isaiah (xiii. 19, xiv. 22, xxi. 2, xlv. 1, xlvii. 27) delivered his predictions. One hundred years after this, Jeremiah prophesied (l. 1, 11, 27, 30, 36, 38, 57). Isaiah names its conquerors, their leader, and states how it will be entered. Both prophets describe its subsequent condition. Herodotus (Bk. i. 114), who lived 250 years after Isaiah, and Xenophon (*Cyrop.* v. ciii. 38), who lived 100 years after Herodotus, furnish minute proof of the accuracy of the fulfilment. Strabo says that in his time "the city was a vast solitude." Lucian (c. 16) affirms that "Babylon will soon be sought for and not found, as is already the case with Nineveh." Pausanias (c. viii. 33) states that nothing was left

but the walls; Jerome, that in his time it was a receptacle for beasts; and modern travellers (including Sir R. K. Porter) testify to the universal desolation. "It is little better than a swamp, and I could not help reflecting (says one) how faithfully the various prophecies have been fulfilled" (*Angus*). "Surrounded by such scenes as the modern traveller describes,\* and comparing them with the pictures of history and prophecy, one may well exclaim with Brownlee:—

"Where are the cities which of old in mighty grandeur rose  
Amid the desert's burning sands, or girt with frozen snows?  
Is there no vestige now remains, their wondrous tale to tell,  
Of how they blazed like meteor-stars, and how, like them  
they fell?

Hark! hark! the voice of prophecy comes o'er the desert  
wide!

Come down, come down, and in the dust thy virgin beauties  
hide:

O 'daughter of Chaldea,' thou no more enthroned halt be,  
For the desert and the wilderness alone shall tell of thee.  
Though old Euphrates still rolls in his everlasting stream,  
Thy brazen gates and golden halls, as though they ne'er  
had been;

Where stood thy massy tower-crowned walls, and palaces  
of pride,

The dragon and the wild beast now therein securely hide;  
The 'besom of destruction' o'er thee hath swept its way  
In wrath, because thine impious hand on God's Anointed  
lay."

\* "Topics for Teachers," ii. 190.

III. Our space warns us that though much more might be said concerning nations and cities (Jerusalem to wit), we must turn to some of the prophecies respecting *individuals*. Ishmael has been already referred to.

1. Three hundred and sixty-one years before the event, *Josiah* was prophetically announced by name, and his acts for the suppression of idolatry were recounted by a prophet who came out of Judah on purpose to denounce the judgments of God upon the priests of the altar, and upon the altar itself, which Jeroboam had then recently erected at Bethel (compare 1 Kings xiii. 1—10, with 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20).

2. One of the most remarkable characters of ancient history, and one that is particularly interesting to the biblical student, is *Cyrus*, who was the subject of a prophecy that the most stubborn unbeliever cannot deny to have been fulfilled. The advent, and name, and acts of this great monarch were with a wonderful exactness predicted by the prophet Isaiah (xliv. 28, xlv. 1—4, 13), and were most wonderfully accomplished (compare Ezra i. 1—4). Josephus, indeed, narrates (*Antiq.* xi. i. 1, 2) a remarkable story. He says that the prophecies of Isaiah respecting Cyrus were shown to

that king, and that, struck with the divine record, he was induced to issue his decree.

3. But remarkable as such predictions concerning persons are, they bear no comparison with those that relate to *Jesus Christ*. Predictions that prove in their precise accomplishment that "the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy," and that in Him "was fulfilled all that the prophets had written concerning Him." So numerous and so minute are the prophecies relating to the Son of God, that we might weaken the force of the great lesson they teach, if we were to indicate some of the most striking; we prefer, therefore, to present a condensed summary of the whole of the most important, leaving it to the Bible student to examine for himself, in each case, the prediction and its fulfilment:—

Son of God (Ps. ii. 7, *cf.* Luke i. 32, 35); seed of woman (Gen. iii. 15, *cf.* Gal. iv. 4); of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7, xxii. 18, *cf.* Gal. iii. 16); of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 12, *cf.* Heb. xi. 17—19); of David (Ps. cxxxii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 5, *cf.* Acts xiii. 23; Rom. i. 3); coming at set time (Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 24, 25, *cf.* Luke ii. 1); born of virgin (Isa. vii. 14, *cf.* Matt. i. 18; Luke ii. 7); called Immanuel (Isa. vii. 14, *cf.* Matt. i. 22, 23); at Bethlehem of Judea

(Micah v. 2, *cf.* Matt. ii. 1; Luke ii. 4—6); great persons come to worship (Ps. lxxii. 10, *cf.* Matt. ii. 1—11); slaying of children (Jer. xxxi. 15, *cf.* Matt. ii. 16—18); called out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1, *cf.* Matt. ii. 15); His herald (Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1, *cf.* Matt. iii. 1—3; Luke i. 17); anointed with Spirit (Ps. xlv. 7; Isa. xi. 2, lxi. 1, *cf.* Matt. iii. 16; John iii. 34; Acts x. 38). Like Moses (Deut. xviii. 15—18, *cf.* Acts iii. 20, 22); Priest Melchizedek (Ps. cx. 4, *cf.* Heb. v. 5, 6); ministry, entering (Isa. lxi. 1, 2, *cf.* Luke iv. 16—21, 43). Galilee (Isa. ix. 1, 2, *cf.* Matt. iv. 12—16, 23); entering Jerusalem (Zech. ix. 9, *cf.* Matt. xxi. 1—5); temple (Hag. ii. 7, 9; Mal. iii. 1, *cf.* Matt. xxi. 12; Luke ii. 27—32; John ii. 13—16); poverty (Isa. liii. 2, *cf.* Mark vi. 3; Luke ix. 58); meekness (Isa. xlii. 2, *cf.* Matt. xii. 15—19; tenderness (Isa. xl. 11, xlii. 3, *cf.* Matt. xii. 15, 20; Heb. iv. 15); without guile (Isa. liii. 9, *cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 22); zeal (Ps. lxxix. 9, *cf.* John ii. 17); parables (Ps. lxxviii. 2, *cf.* Matt. xiii. 34, 35); miracles (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, *cf.* Matt. xi. 4—6; John xi. 47); bearing reproach (Ps. xxii. 6, lxxix. 7, 9, 20, *cf.* Rom. xv. 2); rejected (Ps. lxxix. 8; Isa. liii. 3, *cf.* John i. 11, vii. 5); to Jews, stone of stumbling (Isa. viii. 14, *cf.* Rom. ix. 32; 1 Pet. ii. 8); they hated Him (Ps. lxix. 4; Isa. xlix. 7, *cf.*

John xv. 24, 25); rejected Him (Ps. cxviii. 22, *cf.* Matt. xxi. 42; John vii. 48); combination against Him (Ps. ii. 1, 2, *cf.* Luke xxiii. 12; Acts iv. 27) betrayal (Ps. xli. 9, lv. 12—14, *cf.* John xiii. 18, 21) forsaken by disciples (Zech. xiii. 7, *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 31, 56); sold (Zech. xi. 12, 13, *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 15, xxvii. 7); sufferings (Ps. xxii. 14, 15, *cf.* Luke xxii. 42, 44); for others (Isa. liii. 4—6, 12; Dan. ix. 26, *cf.* Matt. xx. 28); patience (Isa. liii. 7, *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 63, xxvii. 12—14); smitten (Mic. v. 1, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 30); visage marred (Isa. lii. 14, liii. 3, *cf.* John xix. 5); scourged, etc. (Isa. l. 6, *cf.* Mark xiv. 65; John xix. 1); crucifixion (Ps. xxii. 16, *cf.* John xix. 18, xx. 25); forsaken of God (Ps. xxii. 1, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 46); mocked (Ps. xxii. 7, 8, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 39—44); gall, etc., to drink (Ps. lxix. 21, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 34); garments parted (Ps. xxii. 18, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 35); with transgressors (Isa. liii. 12, *cf.* Mark xv. 28); intercession (Isa. liii. 12, *cf.* Luke xxiii. 34); death (Isa. liii. 12, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 50); no bone broken (Exod. xii. 46; Ps. xxxiv. 20, *cf.* John xix. 33, 36); pierced (Zech. xii. 10, *cf.* John xix. 34, 37); buried with rich (Isa. liii. 9, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 57—60); flesh not corrupted (Ps. xvi. 10, *cf.* Acts. ii. 31); resurrection (Ps. xvi. 10; Isa. xxvi. 19, *cf.* Luke xxiv. 6, 31, 34)

ascension (Ps. lxviii. 18, *cf.* Luke xxiv. 51; Acts i. 9); right hand of God (Ps. cx. 1, *cf.* Heb. i. 3); Priest for ever (Zech. vi. 13, *cf.* Rom. viii. 34); corner-stone of Church (Isa. xxviii. 16, *cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7); King in Zion (Ps. ii. 6, *cf.* Luke i. 32; John xix. 33—37); conversion of Gentiles (Isa. xl. 10, xlii. 1, *cf.* Matt. i. 17, 20; John x. 16; Acts x. 45—47); government (Ps. xlv. 6, 7, *cf.* John v. 30; Rev. xix. 11); universal dominion (Ps. lxxii. 8; Dan. vii. 14, *cf.* Phil. ii. 9, 11); everlasting kingdom (Isa. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 14, *cf.* i. 32, 33). Thus in every minute detail were the Scriptures fulfilled; for “to Him give all the prophets witness” (Acts x. 43).\*

With this summary of the predictions relating to the Redeemer, we close our chapter on some of the remarkable prophecies of the Bible; reminding the reader, as we do so, of those words of the apostle (2 Pet. i. 21), which are so eminently suggestive of the Divine origin of the book containing these wonderful announcements, and so clearly explanatory of the reason of their precise fulfilment, “For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

\* “Topics for Teachers,” ii. 192, 193.

## X.

### STRIKING COINCIDENCES IN THE BIBLE.





## X.

### *STRIKING COINCIDENCES IN THE BIBLE.*

ET us first *illustrate* what is meant when we speak of "striking coincidences in the Bible." On the 18th of June, 1770, there died an old man, named John Hatfield, at the age of 102, whose life had many years before been saved by a *striking coincidence*. He had been a soldier in his early days, in the time of William and Mary. At that time he was charged with having fallen asleep when on duty on the terrace at Windsor Castle. An obituary notice which appeared in the *Public Advertiser* goes on to state that "he absolutely denied the charge against him, and solemnly declared (as a proof of his having been awake at the time) that he heard St. Paul's clock strike *thirteen*, the truth of which was much doubted by the court, by reason of the great distance." John Hatfield was found guilty, and sentence of death was passed upon him. While he was awaiting his execution, several persons came forward,

and made an affidavit that the clock did actually strike thirteen, instead of twelve, upon which he received his Majesty's pardon. It was a remarkable thing that the clock should strike thirteen that night ; that he, at that great distance, should hear and count the strokes of the bell, there being a favourable condition of the atmosphere then ; that he should have been charged with being asleep at that very time ; and that other people should have heard and counted the same number of strokes upon the bell. His statement in defence *coincided* with the fact, between which and the individual experience of several persons there was another *coincidence*. Now suppose that John Hatfield, without having been charged with sleeping at his post, had gone off duty, and, some time after, in writing an account of his night watch in a letter to a friend, had incidentally alluded to those thirteen strokes in this way : " As I was walking along the terrace at twelve o'clock, I saw, just after I had heard the clock of St. Paul's, London, strike thirteen, the following sight," etc. Almost any person, on reading that letter, would be disposed to doubt the soldier's statement. For one would say, " I doubt whether John Hatfield is speaking the truth in this letter. The main point is what he saw. But he

incidentally says he saw it just after St. Paul's clock had struck thirteen. Now it is most improbable that the clock did strike thirteen; and still less probable that he heard it strike at all at so great a distance." It would be very natural for a person to come to the conclusion that the soldier's letter was a very unreliable document. A doubt on one portion of it would be presently communicated to the whole. Presently, however, this person receives a letter from a friend in town, who, after describing a sleepless night, adds, "I think the authorities should see to the repairing of St. Paul's clock; for on such a night" (the date corresponding with Hatfield's letter) "it struck thirteen instead of twelve," etc. The receiver of the letter would then begin to think that, after all, there was not so much reason to doubt the soldier's veracity. Still, the great distance is a difficulty. One day, however, he meets with a book descriptive of London, and reads therein an account of the clock of St. Paul's, and how, on a still night, and with a favourable condition of the atmosphere and direction of the wind, the deep tones of the bell may be heard upwards of twenty miles away. Knowing there has been no collusion between his friend who had the sleepless night, and the author of the book

about London, and John Hatfield, the reader of the three documents is forced to the conclusion that they corroborate each other. He has been led to that conclusion by the *striking coincidence* in the three disconnected statements.

Such coincidences abound in all parts of the word of God ; and they present an unanswerable argument for the veracity of the inspired writers of that book. Dr. Paley employed it with great effect in his work entitled *Horæ Paulinæ*; and before his time Doddridge, in his introduction to his paraphrase and notes on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, had said, "Whoever reads over St. Paul's Epistles with attention will discern such intrinsic characters in their genuineness, and the Divine authority of the doctrines they contain, as will perhaps produce in him a stronger conviction than all the external evidence with which they are attended. To which we may add, that the exact coincidence observable between the many *allusions* to particular facts, in this, as well as in other *Epistles*, and the accounts of the facts themselves as they are recorded in the history of the *Acts*, is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of each. More recently this branch of sacred criticism has been treated in a work of great merit by the Rev. J. J.

Blunt, B.D.,\* which we most earnestly commend to the attention of the young Bible student, who, in addition to the work named above, of Dr. Paley, and Dr. Graves's two lectures on the Pentateuch, may also consult with advantage that part of the first volume of Horne's "Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures" which relates to the "genuineness and authenticity" of the Old and New Testaments. Akin to this question of *coincidence between independent writers* is that of *consistency between the various statements of one writer*. A few examples of these matters will be interesting to the more thoughtful of our readers.

It may well surprise us, as Lardner (vol. i. p. 27) suggests, that Felix should hope for any bribe at the hands of Paul (Acts xxiv. 26), unless we suppose that the venal Roman remembered what his prisoner had previously stated (Acts xxiv. 17); for it is evident from the expression of Lysias (Acts xxii. 28) that there was a suspicion in his mind of Paul's veracity, his appearance giving no evidence of means for procuring citizenship by purchase. Yet, though his appearance was one of great poverty, Felix expected a bribe, thinking probably

\* "Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings both of the Old and New Testament." (Murray.)

that all the alms had not been distributed, and that other money was within the apostle's reach ; hence we have an explanation of the charge to the centurion who kept Paul (Acts xxiv. 23). Such a minute and undesigned consistency between the speech of Paul and the conduct of Felix should "convince us that it is no fictitious or forged narrative that we are reading, but a true and very accurate detail of an actual occurrence."

Read in succession the 5th, 10th, and 38th verses of Acts xxvii. The continuous story told by these verses is not seen till they are thus combined. We find that the vessel was a "*ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy.*" We read of the *lading*; it was therefore a merchant-vessel. The cargo, whatever it was (we do not discover this till afterwards), was so valuable that it was only cast overboard in the last extremity. By-and-by we discover that that cargo was *wheat*. One by one these circumstances drop out "at intervals in the course of the narrative, unarranged, unpremeditated, thoroughly incidental ; so that the chapter might be read twenty times, and their agreement with one another, and with contemporary history, be still overlooked." No v how does this *consistent* narrative *coincide* with known facts of

history? Thus: Egypt was the great corn-producing country of antiquity. It sometimes grew corn enough in one year to last for two, and supply other countries. The famine-stricken Israelites went down to the valley of the Nile to buy corn in the days of Joseph. In the days of Paul it was the granary of Rome. It was from the Egyptian port of Alexandria that this vessel sailed. Suetonius tells us\* (*Nero*, § 45) that in times of scarcity the vessels coming from that port to Italy were watched with intense anxiety as they approached the coast. What was by no means usual in the vessels of that day, these merchant-ships of Alexandria were in size almost equal to some of our old men-of-war, and might therefore well accommodate the centurion and his numerous party, in addition to its own crew and lading."

In 1 Kings xvii. we have the story of Elijah and the ravens, concerning which there is much diversity of opinion. It will be known to most that originally the Hebrew Bible was written simply with consonants, and that the vowels—which are not letters at all, but simply points placed below the true letters—are a modern innovation. Learned

\* "Nam et forte accidit, ut in publica fama Alexandrina navis nunciaretur pulverem luctatoribus aulicis advexisse.



Hebraists (e.g. Lightfoot, Boothroyd, etc.) prefer the old original Hebrew, which is still used in the Jewish synagogues, where custom supplies the sound. The introduction of the vowels to represent sounds was to a great extent arbitrary, and not always with the happiest results. Hence the word *orebim*, here rendered "ravens," is precisely the same word which is elsewhere—with the vowel points slightly altered—rendered "Arabians," or "Arabs." So far, therefore, as the word is concerned, the food may have been brought to the prophet by Arabs. The most distinguished of the Jewish rabbis incline to this idea, and so also do many others, including our own Dr. Kitto, who illustrates the changes wrought in words by the introduction of the vowels, by the word GRN, which by the addition of vowels may be *grain*, or *green*, or *groan*, or *grin*.\* Now on the supposition that Dr. Kitto and others who hold this view are right, is there anything in the history that by way of coincidence will support it? Yes, there is. We find, on glancing at the top of the page in our Bible with marginal notes, that the date of this event is B.C. *cir.* 910—*about* 910. The chronology is a little uncertain. It may have been two or three years

\* "Daily Bible Illustrations," iii. 210 ff.

before or after. On turning to 2 Chron. xvii. 11, we find that Arabians were in *that* region at about that time, B.C. 914. They must have been there *some* time, for we cannot suppose that 15,400 animals were collected and driven over all at once. The quantity is accounted for by the famine that prevailed at that time. The probability is, that the Arabs, finding a good market in this time of general scarcity, and having also political reasons for conciliating the king of Judah, made a sort of depôt on the banks of the Jordan, and from time to time sent across the flocks they collected ; some for sale, and some as presents to the king. It is also a curious coincidence that Elijah was himself a native of that very region, "*A Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead.*" Added to the fact that he was their own countryman, there are also the circumstances of Arab hospitality and sympathy with outlawed men to be taken into account. Being the allies of the king of Judah, they would be the more ready to assist one upon whose head a price had been set by the king of Israel. There are also some very important considerations of a moral kind that favour this hypothesis ; but these we pass over, as we have to do with *coincidences* only. Among these we find that *time, place, articles of*

*trade*, and the *nation* of the traders, with their *known character*, coincide with all that the supposition demands.

We read in Luke iii. 14, that while John the Baptist was preaching in the neighbourhood of the Jordan, some soldiers came to him, and "*demanded of him, saying, What shall we do?*" Who were these soldiers? It does not appear that the Romans who were then stationed in Judea were engaged in any war. Besides, the word used by the Evangelist is not στρατιῶται, or *soldiers*, but στρατευόμενοι, *i.e. men who were actually under arms, or marching to battle*. There must have been a sufficient reason for the use of the word, of which another form στρατεύεται (1 Cor. ix. 7) is rendered "*goeth a warfare*." Michaelis (i. 51) indicates a very striking coincidence here by pointing out the fact that at that time, as Josephus informs us (*Ant.* xviii. 5, 1. 2), Herod was *at that very time* engaged in a war with his father-in-law, Aretas, a petty king of Arabia Petræa, whose daughter he had married, but who had returned to her father in consequence of Herod's ill-treatment. The army of Herod, *then* on its march from Galilee, passed of necessity through the country where John was baptizing; and the military men who questioned him were a part

of that army. "So minute, so perfect, and so latent a coincidence was never discovered in a forgery of later ages."

Dr. Marsh (*Lectures*, part v. 78—82) points out another coincidence in ver. 19, 20 of the same chapter of St. Luke. What connection was there between the soldiers of ver. 14 and the place of John's imprisonment, which was in the neighbourhood of the place where the Baptist was preaching? The Evangelist Mark (vi. 17—28) relating the circumstances of the apprehension and death of John, speaks of an *executioner*, but does not explain why a person in actual military service (σπεκουλατωρ) was employed, or why Herodias should have so hated John as to have demanded his death. Now Josephus, in the passage above cited, explains both circumstances. Herod was at war with Aretas. On the march against his father-in-law, Herod gave an entertainment in the fortress of Machærus, not far distant from where John was preaching. Herodias was the cause of that war, since it was on her account that Herod's wife had taken refuge with her father. She had a special interest in accompanying Herod on his march; "and her hatred of John, who had reproved Herod on her account, at that particular time is thus clearly

accounted for. No spurious productions could bear so rigid a test as that which is here applied to the Gospels of Mark and Luke."

St. Luke informs us (Acts xxvii. 1) that when St. Paul was sent from Cæsarea to Rome, he was, with other prisoners, committed to the care of Julius, an officer of the Augustan cohort; that is, a Roman cohort which had the honour of bearing the name of the emperor. On this statement Bishop Marsh (*Lectures*, part v. 82 ff.) makes the following comment: "Now it appears from the account which Josephus has given in his second book on the Jewish war (*Bell. Jud.* ii. 13. 7), that when Felix was procurator of Judea, the Roman garrison at Cæsarea was *chiefly* composed of soldiers who were natives of *Syria*. But it also appears, as well from the same book (cap. xii. 5) as from the twentieth book of his "*Antiquities*" (cap. vi.), that a small body of *Roman* soldiers was stationed there at the same time, and that this body of *Roman* soldiers was dignified with the title of ΣΕΒΑΘ, or Augustan, the same Greek word being employed by Josephus as by the author of the Acts of the Apostles. This select body of Roman soldiers had been employed by Cumanus, who immediately preceded Felix in the procuratorship of Judea, for

the purpose of quelling an insurrection (*Ant. Jud.* xx. 6). And when Festus, who succeeded Felix, had occasion to send prisoners from Cæsarea to Rome, he would of course intrust them to the care of an officer belonging to the select corps. Even *here* we have a coincidence which is worthy of notice; a coincidence which we should never have discovered without consulting the writings of Josephus. But that which is *most* worthy of notice is the circumstance that this select body of soldiers bore the title of Augustan. This title was, of course, known to St. Luke, who accompanied St. Paul from Cæsarea to Rome. But that, in the time of the Emperor Nero, the garrison of Cæsarea, which consisted chiefly of Syrian soldiers, contained also a small body of Roman soldiers, and that they were dignified by the epithet Augustan, are circumstances so minute that no impostor of a later age would have known them; and they prove incontestably that the Acts of the Apostles could have been written only by a person in the situation of St. Luke."

We are told by St. Matthew, that "as Jesus sat at meat *in the house*, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him" (ix. 9, 10). Speaking of an occurrence that concerned himself,

it was quite natural that Matthew should simply say *the house*, without naming its owner, and without perceiving that there was anything vague or obscure in what to him was so plain. St. Mark and St. Luke, who narrate the same incident as historians, and not as participators, tell us whose house it was. St. Mark (ii. 15), speaking of the call of Levi, says that "Jesus sat at meat in *his* house ;" and St. Luke (v. 29) tells us that, "Levi made Him a great feast in *his own* house." The reason that Matthew speaks of the *publicans* may be found in the fact that the writer followed originally the same occupation. "I think," says Blunt, "the odds are very great against the probability of a writer preserving consistency in trifles like these, were he only *devising* a story. I can scarcely imagine that such a person would hit upon the phrase, 'in *the* house,' as an artful way of suggesting that the house was, in fact, his own, and himself an eye-witness of the scene he described ; still less that he would refine yet further, and make the company assembled there to consist of publicans, in order that the whole picture might be complete and harmonious. It may be added that Capernaum, which was the scene of St. Matthew's call, was precisely the place where we might expect

to meet with a man of his vocation, it being a station where such merchandise as was to be conveyed by water-carriage along the Jordan, southwards, might be very conveniently shipped, and where a custom-house would consequently be established. There is a similar propriety in the habitat of Zaccheus (Luke xix. 2); he was 'a chief among the publicans,' and Jesus is said to have fallen in with him near *Fericho*. Now Jericho was the centre of the growth, preparation, and export of balsam, a very considerable branch of trade in Judea, and, therefore, a town which invited the presence of tax-gatherers. These are small matters, but such as bespeak truth in those who detail them."

In the case of Elijah and the ravens we have given what may be termed a *conjectural* coincidence. To this class belongs the following. Read, first in succession, Matt. iv. 21, viii. 21, xx. 20, xxvii. 55, 56. It appears, from the first of these passages, that when James and John were called to follow Christ, their father, *Zebedee, was alive*. From the third quotation it appears that he was dead, since it was the *mother of Zebedee's children* who appealed to Christ on behalf of his sons; and since he was not at the crucifixion, but the *mother of Zebedee's children*, and since also she is not spoken of as the



wife of Zebedee, but as the mother of his children, all this seems to imply that she was a widow. It was during the period between iv. 21 and xx. 20, that one of our Lord's disciples asked of Him permission "*to go and bury his father.*" The interval was brief, and the number of the disciples was small, amongst whom the sons of Zebedee were included. The "inference, therefore, is that the death of *Zebedee* is here alluded to, and that St. Matthew, without a wish perhaps, or thought, either to conceal or express the individual (for there seems no assignable motive for his studying to do either), betrays an event familiar to our mind, in that inadvertent and unobtrusive manner in which the truth so often comes out."

It is of the circumstantiality of the entire narrative, as well as the coincidence of the accounts delivered in the New Testament with the history of those times, that Michaelis thus writes: "Whoever undertakes to forge a set of writings, and ascribe them to persons who lived at a former period, exposes himself to the utmost danger of a discordancy with the history and manners of the age to which his accounts are referred; and this danger increases in proportion as they relate to points not mentioned in general history, but to such as belong

only to a single city, sect, religion, or school. Of all books that ever were written, there is none, if the New Testament is a forgery, so liable to detection. The scene of the action is not confined to a single country, but displayed in the greatest cities in the Roman empire ; allusions are made to the various manners and principles of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, which are carried so far with respect to the last nation as to extend even to the trifles and follies of their schools. A Greek or Roman Christian who lived in the second or third century, though as well versed in the writings of the ancients as Eustathius or Aconius, would still have been wanting in Jewish literature ; and a Jewish convert in those ages, even the most learned rabbi, would have been equally deficient in the knowledge of Greece or Rome. If, then, the New Testament, thus exposed to detection (had it been an imposture), is found, after the severest researches, to harmonize with the history, the manners, and the opinions of the first century ; and since, the more minutely we inquire, the more perfect we find the coincidence, we must conclude that it was beyond the reach of human abilities to effectuate so wonderful a deception" (*Michaelis's Introduction*, i. 49). Speaking of the coincidences alone, Paley says

(*Evidences*, ii. 136): "And the *undesignedness* of these agreements (which undesignedness is gathered from their latency, their minuteness, their obliquity, the suitability of the circumstances in which they consist to the places in which those circumstances occur, and the circuitous references by which they are traced out) demonstrates that they have not been produced by meditation, or by any fraudulent contrivance; but coincidences from which these causes are excluded, and which are too close and numerous to be accounted for by accidental occurrences of fiction, must necessarily have truth for their foundation."



# XI

## THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS OF THE BIBLE



## XI.

### THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

N some old copies of the present authorized version of the Bible we find, between what we are accustomed to call the Old Testament and the New Testament, a number of books that pass by the name of the Apocrypha. What is the meaning of the word "apocrypha"? Why do these books bear that name? Why are they found in some old copies of the Bible? Are there any other books to which the term "apocrypha" may be applied? Such are some of the questions that we design to answer in this chapter.

The word *apochrypha*—derived from the Greek απο, from ; and κρυπτω, to hide—literally signifies *hidden, secreted, mysterious*. A burial place beneath a church, as distinguished from the ordinary graveyard, is called a *crypt*; and by that word, also from the root κρυπτω, we understand a *concealed* or *select* place of interment. A large class of plants, including the ferns, we call *cryptogamia*, because they *have their fructification concealed*. In the two or

three places where the word occurs in the New Testament it has the sense of concealed; thus (Mark iv. 22), "There is nothing hid (*κρυπτόν*) which shall not be manifested, neither was anything kept secret (*ἀπόκρυφον*) but that it should come abroad." By degrees the word *apocrypha*, as applied to books, came to have a bad sense, and to signify "*spurious*," or "*forged*." For the use of the term a number of reasons have been given, of which none are hardly tenable. Dismissing such reasons, "we may fairly suppose that books were denominated '*apocryphal*' either because they were not read in public, being kept as it were in the background, or else because they were regarded as containing mysterious doctrines, which were to be withheld from the multitude, and to be communicated only to those of understanding, to the initiated. Some there were of mythical character beyond any in the collection now known as '*Apocrypha*:' to these such a designation would still more fitly apply. And, as several such books claimed to be the productions of illustrious men, prophets, and inspired—whose names, it was soon evident, were falsely assumed—both the propriety of the term is obvious, and the natural consequent deprecation of its meaning readily accounted for. The last-named reason,

therefore, for the application of the word '*apocrypha*' would seem the more probable one."\* The Dominican Fathers, Richard and Girand, define the term to signify (1) anonymous or pseudepigraphal books; (2) those which are not publicly read, although they may be read with edification in private; (3) those which do not pass for authentic and of Divine authority, although they pass for being composed by a sacred author or an apostle, as the *Epistle of Barnabas*; (4) dangerous books composed by ancient heretics to favour their opinions; and (5) books which, after having been contested, are put into the canon by consent of the churches, as *Tobit*, etc.† The term has also been applied by Jerome to certain books not found in the Hebrew canon, but yet publicly read from time immemorial in the Christian Church for edification, although not considered authority in controversies of faith. It is in allusion to this saying of the old father that we find the following in the sixth article of the English Church. After enumerating the canonical writings of the Old Testament, the article proceeds: "And the other books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and

\* Rev. John Ayre, M.A.

† See art. *Apocrypha*, Kitto's *Ency.*



instruction of manners ; but yet it doth not apply them to establish any doctrine." To this day, therefore, portions of the apocryphal writings may be found among the Scripture lessons appointed to be read in the services of the English Church.

When the light of the Reformation began to dawn, the question of the canonicity of these writings stood out more definite and distinct. Their imperfect authority was then more fully exposed. On the other hand, the Church of Rome gave them that formal sanction which they had never before received ; pronounced all but the two Books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh sacred canonical Scripture, and anathematized those who refused to regard them in that light. In the Roman canon, therefore, they are not called Apocrypha, nor are they placed together, as though there were anything—in the way even of historical doubt—that distinguished them from books whose inspiration is unquestioned, but they are distinguished according to their assumed dates or contents. Tobit and Judith have their place with the historical books of Scripture ; Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus are placed with the writings of Solomon, on the assumption that he was their author ; and the Rest of Esther is incorporated with the book of that name ; while

the Story of the Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon are connected with the canonical Book of Daniel; and Baruch comes immediately after Jeremiah. Their presence in this Romish canon may, in part, be accounted for the view entertained of apocryphal writings by the Dominican Fathers, quoted above, when they termed them "*dangerous books, composed by ancient heretics to favour their opinions.*" Passages in some of them do certainly *favour* the *opinions* of the Romish Church. Thus, praying for the dead is inculcated by 2 Macc. xii. 43—45; and the intercession of saints by Bar. iii. 4; while there are also many assertions which are not in harmony with the doctrine of justification by faith; as Tob. xii. 8; Eccclus. iii. 3, 30; xvii. 22; xxxv. 3. In view of these things it is not difficult to see why the Roman Catholic Church should be so anxious to retain these writings as canonical, notwithstanding the terms of strong commendation in which even suicide is mentioned (2 Macc. xiv. 41—46); nor why the Protestant Church should repudiate these writings as sacred, unsupported as they are by any sufficient testimony, and containing as they do doctrines which are alien from those of Scripture.

The *external* evidence for rejecting their authority as Divine is most conclusive. In no catalogue of canonical Scriptures made during the first four centuries are they even named. It was not till the decision of the Council of Trent, in 1545, that they were accepted as part of the rule of faith. While Josephus expressly excludes them (*Cont. Apion.* i. 8), Philo never quotes them as he does the sacred Scriptures. By the Jews they were never viewed as part of the canon. Jesus and His apostles never quote them—a fact of no small weight in considering their claims, since Paul several times quoted heathen poets. It is to be observed also that Malachi, the last inspired prophet, closes his predictions by recommending the books of Moses, and intimating that no other messenger is to be expected by his countrymen till the coming of the second Elijah (Mal. iv. 4—6). “Against this decisive external evidence must be placed the fact that particular books have been quoted as canonical by one or more of the Fathers. Baruch alone is quoted as canonical by Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, and Epiphanius. Of the Latin Church, Augustine *alone* quotes as canonical Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. By other writers of the third and fourth centuries,

the books are not cited, or their canonicity is denied."<sup>a</sup>

Equally conclusive against their inspiration is *internal* evidence. (1) None of the writers claim Divine authority; while some (2 Macc. ii. 23, xv. 38, and Prol. of Ecclus.) virtually disown it. (2) Some of the statements contained in these books are at variance with history. Thus the story of Bel and the Dragon contradicts the account of Daniel's being cast into the den of lions; while Baruch (i. 2) does not agree with Jeremiah (xliii. 6, 7). (3) Some of the statements are also self-contradictory. Thus in one place (1 Macc. vi. 4—16) Antiochus Epiphanes is said to have died in Babylon; while in another (2 Macc. i. 13—16) it is stated that he was stoned to death in the temple of Nanea, in Persia; and the writer of the Book of Wisdom asserts that it was composed by Solomon, notwithstanding that he quotes (xiii. 11—18) the writings of Isaiah (xliv. 10—17), which were not in existence till about two hundred years after Solomon had died. (4) Besides inculcating doctrines which are unscriptural, as cited above, they (5) contain precepts which are directly opposed to the word of God. Thus sanction is given to falsehood (Tob. v. 12, xii. 15.)

<sup>a</sup> Angus, "Handbook to the Bible," 82, 83.

assassination is praised (Jud. ix. 2—9; cf. Gen. xlix. 7), and sorcery is allowed (Tob. vi. 16, 17). Still, although they are of no *authority* as part of the rule of faith, they are of value as historical documents, and may even be consulted for “instruction of manners,” in the measure in which they “exemplify the spirit and precepts of the Gospel.” “The whole illustrate the progress of knowledge among the Jews, their taste, their religious character, and their government; while some of the books explain ancient prophecies, and prove the fulfilment of them, and others exhibit the most exalted sentiments and principles of uninspired men.”

So far our remarks have been limited to the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament Scriptures. Only these ordinarily go by the name Apocrypha, and doubtless by a great number it is assumed that there are no other biblical writings of an apocryphal character. Such, however, is not the case. In connection with the New Testament there are apocryphal writings—both gospels and epistles—which, although without the least authority, are not without interest. Many of our readers will be surprised to hear of “The History of Joseph the Carpenter;” of “The Gospel of the Infancy;” of

"The Protevangelion of James," and "The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite;" of "The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary," and "The History of the Nativity of Mary and the Saviour;" of "The Gospel of Marcion;" of "The Gospel of Nicodemus;" of "The Apprehension and Death of Pilate;" of the mutilated and altered "Gospel of St. John," preserved in the archives of the Templars of St. John of Jerusalem, in Paris; of "The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans;" of "The Third Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians;" of "The Epistle of Peter to James;" and of "The Epistles of Paul and Seneca." Yet such are the titles of some of the books of an apocryphal character connected with the New Testament, and bearing the names, in some instances, of well-known New Testament worthies. Another book, entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas," said to have been written by Hermas, of Rome, to whom Paul addressed special salutations (Rom. xvi. 14), is of very high antiquity, and has usually been classed with the epistles of the so-called Apostolic Fathers. Until very recently, only a few fragments of this work have been known as quotations in other authors. But in 1859 the first part of the original, being nearly one-fourth of the whole, was discovered by Tischendorf at the end

of the *Codex Sinaiticus* (see *supra*, chap. i.). The "Epistle of Barnabas" (also referred to in the first chapter of this work) has been the subject of controversy almost ever since its first publication in the seventeenth century. "The external evidence for its genuineness, it may be allowed, is considerable ; but, besides some conflicting testimonies, criteria furnished by the Epistle itself lead to the opposite conclusion" (*Ryland*).

"The information which the Evangelists were not instructed to give, there were many who, in the early ages of Christianity, undertook to supply, and it would need a larger disquisition than would be proper here,\* to render intelligible how it happened that certain apocryphal gospels, or narratives framed entirely from the fancy, could not only be written by well-meaning men, who thought that they did God service ; but that such narratives should have been received and credited by large bodies of Christians. Two general principles seem to have conspired in the construction of the narrative portions of these books. One was the desire to fill up gaps, or remove imagined discrepancies in the canonical Gospels, and thus make the story complete ; the other was a wish to fulfil all the pro-

\* Kitto's "Daily Biblical Illustrations," vii. 154.

phacies of the Old Testament by having ready a fact for every supposed prediction. The operation of these principles will best be shown by a few examples. The Gospel history is fragmentary. Whole passages in the life of Jesus are passed over in silence; for instance, not only His childhood and youth, but the period between His resurrection and ascension. But how did Jesus grow up? What were His occupations and tastes? How was He regarded at home by His parents and neighbours? Did He laugh? Did He play? Did He mingle with the boys of His age? Did He go to school? Did He exhibit any extraordinary wisdom? any miraculous power? Did He work at any trade? These were, in some degree, natural questions. Curiosity also seized upon the recorded incidents of His biography, and demanded further information. It wanted to know the private history of the immaculate birth; and what took place on the journey to Egypt, and there; whether Jesus was circumcised. It asked how His trial was conducted, and who were His judges, and a thousand other things, not forgetting to claim the solution of all historical doubts and disagreements. Such questions, in such an age, could not fail of receiving answers. Fancy is never slow to gratify inquisi-



tiveness, and inquisitiveness will not be dainty if it only can be satisfied. It seems, accordingly, as if every possible query respecting Christ was met, in these apocryphal gospels, with the most fearless confidence and the faith of the readers, and their incapacity for historical criticism. Let us give some examples. The particulars of the flight into Egypt are related with the utmost minuteness of detail. Besides the docile trees, the spontaneous springs, and the marvellous cures, wild beasts escort the holy family, and the robbers of the desert flee before them. But the way to Egypt is long. Perhaps it was difficult to invent miracles enough to beguile it. Jesus therefore shortens the distance, so that the journey of many days is accomplished in one: 'straight-way the mountains of Egypt came in sight.' In a wilderness, as they are travelling, the pilgrims fell in with two robbers who are afterwards crucified with Jesus; their names are Titus and Dumachus. The former bribes the latter to let the strangers pass unmolested, and Jesus predicts his blessed fate on the spot. In Egypt, the sick and leprous are cured, and the dead are raised, by application of the water in which His person or His clothing had been washed." "The apocryphal

gospels," says another writer,\* "abject productions as, whether contemplated in a literary or moral point of view, they must be allowed to be, are yet instructive in this respect, that they show us what manner of gospels were the result, when men drew from their own fancy, and devised Christs of their own, instead of resting on the basis of historical truth, and delivering to the world faithful records of Him who indeed had lived and died among them. Here, as ever, the glory of the true comes out into strongest light by its comparison with the false. But in nothing, perhaps, are these apocryphal gospels more worthy of note than in the difference between the main features of their miracles and those of the canonical Gospels. Thus, in the canonical, the miracle is indeed essential, yet, at the same time, ever subordinated to the doctrine which it confirms, a link in the great chain of God's manifestation of Himself to men; its ethical significance never falls into the background; but the wonder work of grace and power has, in every case where this can find room, nearer or remoter reference to the moral condition of the person or persons in whose behalf it is wrought. The miracles even

\* Archbishop Trench, "Notes on the Miracles of our Lord," p. 40.

lead us off from themselves to their author ; they appear as emanations from the glory of the Son of God ; but it is in Him we rest, and not in them ; they are but the halo round Him, and have their worth from Him—not contrariwise, He from them. They are held, too, together by His strong and central personality, which does not leave them a conglomerate of marvellous anecdotes, accidentally heaped together ; but parts of a great organic whole, of which every part is in vital coherence with all other. But it is altogether otherwise in these apocryphal narratives. To say that the miracle occupies in them the foremost place, would very inadequately express the facts of the case. They are everything. Some of these so-called histories are nothing else but a string of these ; which yet (and this, too, is singularly characteristic) stand wholly disconnected from the ministry of Christ : not one of them belongs to the period after His baptism ; but they are all miracles of the infancy : in other words, of that time whereof the canonical history relates no miracle, and not merely does not relate any, but is remarkably at pains to tell us that during it no miracle was wrought, the miracle in Cana of Galilee being His first (John ii. 11). Indeed, so far from having a *religious*, they are often want-

ing in a *moral* element. The Lord Jesus appears in them as a wayward, capricious, passionate child ; to be feared, indeed, seeing that He is furnished with such formidable powers of avenging every wrong or accidental injury which He meets ; and so bearing Himself, that the request which some other parents of some other children are represented as making, that He may be kept within the house, for He brings harm and mischief wherever He comes, is perfectly justified by the facts. It may be well to cite a few examples in proof, however harshly some of them may jar on the Christian ear. Thus, some children refuse to play with Him, hiding themselves from Him ; He pursues, and turns them all into kids. Another child by accident runs against Him, and throws Him down ; whereupon He, being exasperated, exclaims, 'As thou hast made Me to fall, so shalt thou fall and not rise ;' at the same hour the child fell down and expired. He has a dispute with the master who is teaching Him letters, concerning the order in which He shall go through the Hebrew alphabet, and His master strikes Him ; whereupon Jesus curses him, and straightway his arm is withered, and he falls on his face and dies. This goes on, till at length Joseph says to Mary, 'Henceforward let us keep

Him within doors, for whosoever sets himself against Him perishes.' His passionate readiness to avenge Himself shows itself at the very earliest age. At five years old he has made a pool of water, and is moulding sparrows from the clay. Another child, the son of a scribe, displeased that He should do this on the Sabbath, opens the sluices of the pool, and lets out the water. On this, Jesus is indignant, gives him many injurious names, and causes him to wither and wholly dry up with the curse. Such is the image which the authors of these books give us of the holy child Jesus; and no wonder, for man is not only unable to realize the perfect, he is unable to conceive it. The idea is as much a gift, as the power to realize that idea. Even the miracles which are not of this revolting character, are childish tricks, like the tricks of a conjuror, never solemn acts of power and love. Jesus enters the shop of a dyer, who has received various cloths from various persons, to be dyed of divers colours. In the absence of the master, He throws them all into the dying vat together; and when the dyer returns and remonstrates, draws them out of the vat, each dyed according to the colour which was enjoined. He and some other children make birds and animals of clay; while each is boasting the

superiority of his work, Jesus says, 'I will cause those which I have made to go;' which they do, the animals leaping, and the birds flying, and at His bidding returning, and eating and drinking from His hand. While yet an infant at His mother's breast, He bids a palm-tree to stoop that she may pluck the fruit; it obeys, and only returns to its position at His command. Another time, His mother sends Him to the well for water; the pitcher breaks, and He brings the water in His cloak. And as the miracles which He does, so those that are done in regard to Him, are idle and monstrous; the ox and ass worshipping Him, a new-born infant in the crib, may serve as an example. . . . The most striking, perhaps, of the miracles related in regard of the child Jesus, is that of the falling down of the idols of Egypt at His presence in the land; for it has in it something of a deeper significance, as a symbol and prophecy of the overthrow of the idol worship of the world by Him who was now coming into the world. . . . But with very few such partial exceptions as these, the apocryphal gospels are a barren and dreary waste of wonders without object or aim; and only instructive as making us strongly to feel, more strongly than but for these examples we might have felt, how needful

are other factors besides power for the producing of a true miracle ; that wisdom and love must be there also ; that where men conceive of power as its chiefest element, that gives us only a hateful mockery of the divine. Had a Christ such as these gospels portray actually lived upon earth, He had been no more than a potent and wayward magician, from whom all men would have shrunk with a natural instinct of distrust and fear."

We shall be pardoned for quoting at so great length from the writings of Trench and Kitto, since they place before the reader so vividly the character of the *spurious*, and by contrast make the *genuine* so conspicuously a divine production. "The result of the whole," to quote once more from the words of Kitto, "is to render us deeply thankful that God has given and preserved to us authentic and divinely inspired narratives, free from all error or stain of man's devices ; which have stood the most excruciating processes of criticism, and on which every truth-seeking mind is able to rely with the most unwavering confidence."

## **XII.**

### **THE LITERARY FEATURES OF THE BIBLE**





## XII

### *THE LITERARY FEATURES OF THE BIBLE.*



PART from its inspiration—its Divine authority, as a rule of faith and practice—its wondrous influence upon the heart and life of man—and other questions related to its origin, and contents, and history—the *Bible*, regarded simply as a literary production, stands forth, in the presence of all other works of authorship, unique, unrivalled, unapproachable. It is of its literary characteristics we shall now speak—or rather we will chiefly ask some others, coroneted peers in the parliament of letters, to speak of them. In the Holy Scriptures the old Spartan prayer, “Grant us the beautiful with the good,” is abundantly realized. “When God made the Bible as the guide and oracle of man, had He meant it as a mere lesson book of duty, a volume less various and less attractive would have answered every end. A few plain paragraphs, announcing God’s own character and His disposition towards us sinners here on earth, mentioning the provision which He

has made for our future happiness, and indicating the different duties which He would have us perform—a few simple sentences would have sufficed to tell us what God is, and what He would have us to do. There was no need of the picturesque narrative and the majestic poem—no need of the proverb, the story, and the psalm. A chapter of theology, and another of morals, a short account of the Incarnation and the great Atonement, and a few pages of rules and directions for the Christian life, might have contained the vital essence of Scripture, and have supplied us with a Bible of simplest meaning and smallest size; and in that case the Bible would have been consulted only by those rare and wistful spirits to whom the great Hereafter is a subject of anxiety, who are really anxious to know what God is, and how they themselves may please Him. But, in giving that Bible, its Divine Author had regard to the mind of man. He knew that man has more curiosity than piety, more taste than sanctity, and that more persons are anxious to hear some new or read some beautiful thing than to hear or read about God and the great salvation. He knew that few would ever ask, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ till they came in contact with the Bible itself, and therefore He

made the Bible not only an instructive book, but an attractive one—not only true, but enticing. He filled it with marvellous incident and engaging history—with sunny pictures from Old-World scenery, and affecting anecdotes from the patriarchal times. He replenished it with stately argument and thrilling verse, and sprinkled it over with sententious wisdom and proverbial pungency. He made it a book of lofty thoughts and noble images—a book of heavenly doctrine, but withal of earthly adaptation. In preparing a guide to immortality, Infinite Wisdom gave not a dictionary, nor a grammar, but a Bible—a book which, in trying to catch the heart of man, should captivate his taste, and which, in transforming his affections, should also expand his intellect. The pearl is of great price, but even the casket is of exquisite beauty. The sword is of ethereal temper, and nothing cuts so keen as its double edge; but there are jewels on the hilt, and exquisite inlaying on the scabbard. The shekels are of the purest ore, but even the scrip which contains them is of a texture more curious than that the artists of earth could fashion it. The apples are gold, but even the basket is silver.”\* Yet withal the Bible is a terribly earnest book. A

\* Rev. J. Hamilton, D.D.

book that should charm, but not instruct, would be a toy rather than a teacher. It might occupy a vacant moment, but not illuminate a thoughtful hour. For mere amusement, a superstructure of fiction on a shallow foundation of fact, or a weak trellis of prose adorned with the many-tinted flowers of poesy, would have sufficed. Such is not the book that God has given to the world. Its Author addresses both the heart and the head, both the fancy and the judgment, of man. While its sympathy and love touch all hearts, its wise thoughtfulness tests, satisfies, and surpasses the strength of all finite intellects. "It is," says Bishop Hopkins, "a ford wherein a lamb may wade, and a sea wherein an elephant may swim." "There is no book," says that famous jurist, Sir Matthew Hale, "like the Bible for excelling wisdom, learning, and use." That great orientalist, Sir William Jones, might well say, "I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatsoever language they may have been written." Few writers composed with

more of masculine strength and beauty and purity than Coleridge, whose opinion it was that "intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being *vulgar* in point of style;" and that rare scholar, Robert Boyle, said of it, "It is a matchless volume; it is impossible that we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly. I use the Scriptures, not as an arsenal, to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe, and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored."

To pronounce an eulogium upon the literary excellencies and beauties of the Bible is not, after all, the object we have before us; for,—

"To gild refinèd gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light  
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

Let us rather illustrate these features from the book itself "There are no songs," said Milton, "comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those

the Scriptures teach." Let us glance at some of these matters.

Take the *poetry* of the Bible as an example. Shall we speak of its varieties—the lyric, the elegy, the patriotic war-song, the funeral requiem, the dramatic, the idyl, the epic? or of its elements—the descriptive, the sublime, the pathetic? or of its characteristics—its originality, its spontaneity, its religiousness? Alas! we have not space to analyze; nor to classify or catalogue even the principal illustrations of each variety have we room. A volume of entrancing beauty and grandeur might be easily compiled of "poetical extracts" from the word of God—not merely of long quotations from the Song of Solomon, the Psalms of David, and the Book of Job—books in their very construction poetical—but also of passages full of poetic thought and imagery, deeply imbedded,—like Israel's song of triumph by the Red Sea shore, or the song of Deborah and Barak on the fall of Sisera, or the solemn dirge that David chanted when "the beauty of Israel was slain,"—in the midst of the chronicles of nations and the histories of men. Scarcely does the shout of victory ring through any martial song with a clearer note than in the lofty pæan that Moses opened, and Miriam with her timbrel closed,

as with her maidens, in response to the men's deeper voices, she led off the refrain, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider hath He thrown into the midst of the sea." Scarcely can a line of deeper pathos be found in any tragic verse than Deborah's description of the mother of Sisera looking out of a window, and crying through the lattice, "Why is his chariot *so* long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" Nor do we remember to have read anything more touching than the plaintive wail of David, in which the exulting remembrance of his lost friend's prowess alternates with passionate appeals to the "mountains of Gilboa," and the "daughters of Israel," and the distressful sobbings of his loving heart. But it is in such compositions as the Book of Job that the spirit of Hebrew poetry sustains her sublimest flight. "I call that," says Carlyle, speaking of this book, "apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew, such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism and sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book! all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem, man's destiny and God's



ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines—grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly-understanding heart. So *true* every way; true eyesight and vision for all things—material things no less than spiritual: the horse, ‘hast thou clothed his neck with *thunder*?’—‘he *laughs* at the shaking of the spear!’ Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind—so soft, and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible, or out of it, of equal literary merit.”

“Without dwelling upon or even specifying the poetical passages of the Scriptures, which would be, indeed, to enumerate no small part of the texts and themes of this wonderful book—for the Bible is a mass of beautiful figures; its words and its thoughts are alike poetical; it has gathered around its central truths all natural beauty and interest; it is a temple with one altar and one God, but illuminated by a thousand varied lights, and studied with a thousand ornaments;”<sup>\*</sup>—there is one

\* George Gilfillan.

point especially in connection with its contents, and their relation to modern compositions, that deserves attention. We refer to its promotion of literature and the fine arts. And in regard to poetry, as the subject now under consideration, *the Bible has supplied the principal poets with their most attractive themes.* "As the profoundest philosophy of ancient Rome and Greece lighted her taper at Israel's altar, so the sweetest strains of the pagan muse were swept from harps attuned on Zion's hills." \* Much more are modern, and especially Christian, poets indebted, for thought and language and subject, to the word of God. There did he, most gifted of them all, find a theme equal to the immensity of his imagination and the wide sweep of his poetic vision. When the author of the "Allegro" and the "Penseroso" essayed at length to build the grandest epic the world has ever seen, the subject selected was from this book. Had Moses not written the Pentateuch, Milton could not have written the "Paradise Lost." His next great epic was the "Paradise Regained." Thus the New Testament, as well as the Old, winged the loftiest poetic genius ever possessed by uninspired man. The Bible, in its two parts of Old

• Dr. Thompson.

Testament and New Testament, completes itself, reckoned Milton; hence to this book he turned for the completion of the epical idea. And if this great master of the divine art attempt the drama, he again turns to this book, and gives the world his "Samson Agonistes." Foreign poets are equally indebted to the Bible. Dante's "Inferno," Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," and Klopstock's "Messiah," may be regarded as illustrations. Amongst epic poems may be ranged the "Course of Time," by Pollok, full of Bible truths and sentiments; and to this class would have belonged that great poem which Coleridge projected, of which the subject—"The Destruction of Jerusalem"—was also borrowed from the word of God. Here, then, we find the epic muse, with the world of fiction all open to her range, and the pages of profane history spread out before her poetic eye: yet not in these could she find her fitting theme; for she must sing of subjects more fair than these unfold, and of events more grand than those record. To these poets may be added Spenser, whose "Faëry Queen" is enriched with allusions borrowed from the Hebrew muse; Herbert, who wrote "The Temple;" Giles Fletcher, who gave us "Christ's Victory and Triumph;" with Philip Quarles, and

Donne, and Crashaw, and Cowley, and Parnell, who all derived their choicest thoughts from this one book. Cowper also sang of Faith, Hope, and Charity; Grahame, of the Sabbath; Blair, of the Grave; Heber, of Palestine; Montgomery, of "The World before the Flood;" and Michael Bruce, of "The Last Day:" all biblical subjects. Even Byron has given us his "Hebrew Melodies;" and Moore, his "Song of Miriam," and other pieces full of Bible thought; and Pope, "The Messiah;" while Burns's "Cottar's Saturday Night," perhaps the most beautiful piece that flowed from his pen, derives its force from the "big a' Bible" of which he speaks. Our hymnology obviously could not have existed but for that book whose precepts and doctrines and promises have supplied it both with subject and inspiration.\* Not only has the Bible supplied the poets with themes and material, *it has had an immense indirect influence in moulding and colouring our poetic literature.* Two things ensure this. A true poet will be an interpreter of the spirit of the age in which he lives. Now, the spirit of the age is, somehow, deeply penetrated with the spirit of the Bible. It has

\* For further illustrations of this subject, see "Literary Characteristics of the Bible," by Rev. W. Trail, A.M.

pervaded and imbued the popular mind. The poet, catching by reflection the spirit or the ideas of the age—ideas which the Bible has sent afloat—would set himself to shape them into verse, unconsciously, it might be, whence they had come. That is one reason. The age—unconsciously, perhaps—thinks and feels in the diction of the Bible; the poet, interpreting this spirit, clothes his verse with Bible phrase and thought. Then, secondly, if the poet himself has come in contact with the book which thus leavens the age, then, owing to its assimilating power and the poet's temperament, there would be transferred to his soul its higher forms of thought and deeper moods of feeling, which, when he afterwards shaped them into his own verse, would be but reflections from its pages, though he might not remember them as such. In this way the indirect influence of the Bible over our natural poetry is immense.

Fully as much might be said of the histories, the biographies, and the sciences of the Bible—fully as much of the relation of the book to sculpture, and painting, and music. It may, indeed, be called the painter's book. The picture galleries of Europe are hung with innumerable proofs that, far beyond all others, it has furnished subjects for the pencil

of the artist. The great works of Raphael, Angelo, Titian, Corregio, Murillo, Leonardo, Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, indeed of all the great masters, are biblical subjects. While the masterpieces of those peerless composers, Handel and Haydn, are they not founded on subjects that this inexhaustible treasury has furnished?

Another literary peculiarity of the word of God is its *universal adaption*. Nearly all lands, and well-nigh every tribe—civilized, barbarian, bond and free—meet here. The sable Ethiopian, the dusky Arabian, the swarthy Assyrian, the child of the desert, the warrior of Rome, the polished Grecian, and that strange cosmopolitan the Jew, all “live, and move, and have their being” in its densely populated pages. There is scarcely a land to which we can carry the Bible, of which the natives may not find something addressed to their sympathies through some representatives of their race. Still further is the universality of the book shown in the wide sweep it takes of almost all branches of human inquiry, and in its numerous references to almost every class and calling. The king may here learn something that concerns himself, and which, if studied and practised by princes, would have preserved to many a one his crown,

and have saved many a nation from that worst of public nuisances, a godless ruler. The working man may here read of his craft, and, in the allusion to it, discover that the God of the whole earth thinketh upon the poor and lowly. The merchant is reminded of the true merchandise, the pearl of great price, and is recommended to buy the truth, and sell it not. The judge and the witness may find a word to them ; nor will those who have a fatal facility for figuring in courts of justice search in vain for wise precepts that would preserve them from the anxieties of annoying litigation, or the gloomy shadows of the prisoner's cell. The soldier, amid many records of "hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach," will find also an account of the good fight of faith, of the invulnerable "armour of God," and the victory of Him who comes off more than a conqueror at last. The sailor may not only read the story of a voyage and a shipwreck—which by competent judges has been pronounced the finest piece of composition in the Greek language—but he may also learn how to navigate the not less stormy sea of life, and reach at last the desired haven. The tradesman may not only find many shrewd hints on buying and selling, but may also learn the truth—of which he has, in

some cases, need to be reminded—that a just balance is the delight of the Lord. The husband man finds in this volume allusions almost innumerable to his calling, and by them is conducted to the understanding of the “good seed,” of the growth of the Christian character from the early blade to the “full corn in the ear,” and is led by familiar images to reflect upon the great harvest of the world. And students, everywhere, are urged “to give attendance to reading,” and are reminded of what they often experience, that “much study is a weariness to the flesh.” It is addressed to all stages of human life. Childhood never tires of the coat of many colours, of the ark of bulrushes, of the Shunamite’s son, of the youth that slew the giant, of the captive maid, of the story of young Josiah, or of the wonderful Child found, after two days’ anxious search, surrounded by grave doctors, “and both hearing and asking them questions.” Youth finds entertainment as well as instruction in the biographies of Joseph, and Jacob, and Daniel, and other “holy men of old.” Manhood is ever and everywhere charmed by the holy maxims, the just retributions, the unexpected deliverances, the heavenly principles, and the sublime doctrines of this old book. And old age is never weary of



reading, though with failing vision, of its own crown of glory, of the fruit it may yield to the end of life, and of those promises which never fail amid the fleeting shows and tinselled splendours of the "present evil world." It is universal also from its adaptation to every state of the human heart. Here the presumptuous sinner is condemned, the proud is confounded, the humble is exalted, the penitent is comforted, the trembling believer is confirmed, the hypocrite is unmasked, the painted Pharisee is stripped of his disguises, the rejoicing saint is cautioned; and man, whatever his spiritual condition, finds himself addressed by One who "knoweth him altogether, and who understandeth his thoughts afar off." This universal fitness of the word of God arises from two circumstances: the unity of the race it addresses, and the human sympathy that breathes throughout its pages. There is "one touch of nature" that "makes the whole world kin;" for "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature," is the command of One who fashioneth our hearts alike.

To other points in its literary features we can only briefly allude. The Bible "*has a self-perpetuating and multiplying power.*" Infidels have

written books; where are they? Where is Porphyry, Julian? Fragments of them there are; but we are indebted even for this to Christian criticism. Where is Hume, Voltaire, Bolingbroke? It requires the world's reprieve to bring a copy out of the prison of their darkness. Where is the Bible? Wherever there is light. Speaking the language of heaven in seven-score and three of the tongues of earth, and giving the word of God by forty millions of voices to five times as many millions of ears, and in tongues spoken by six hundred millions of men; and, having swept its path of storm through all time, it still walks triumphant, despite earth's dying malice and hell's eternal wrath; and, like the apocalyptic angel, though it wraps its mantle of cloud around it, calmly looks out upon the world with a face as it were the sun encircled with the rainbow." While Seneca was composing his morals, while Lucanus was pouring out his verse, while Pliny the elder was collecting his facts of natural history, while Quintilian was arranging his principles of rhetoric, while Juvenal was trimming his satires, while Pliny the younger was inditing his letters, and while Tacitus was compiling his history, the Christian author, Paul, was dictating his epistles to Rome and Corinth and elsewhere. Their works have some

of them perished ; and while, of those that survive, the theories of many are exploded, the facts of others are disputed, and all are found only on the shelves of academic libraries or on the desks of scholars, the writings of Gamaliel's old pupil, translated now into one hundred and fifty spoken languages, are read to this day by prince and peasant the wide world over. Very little do we care about the rounded periods of the ancient rhetorician, or the ethics of the old moralist ; but the words of Paul are still pregnant with a spirit and life—a treasury for the preacher, a manual for the teacher of youth, an armoury whence those who are set for the defence of the Gospel provide themselves with weapons, keen-edged and sharp-pointed as ever, wherewith to cut through the thick-skinned coverings of prejudice and sin.

Viewed simply as a literary production, "the Bible is a standing and astonishing miracle. Written fragment by fragment, throughout the course of fifteen centuries, under different states of society, and in different languages, by persons of the most opposite tempers, talents, and conditions, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, bond and free—cast into every form of instructive composition and good writing, history, prophecy,

poetry, allegory, emblematical representation, judicious interpretation, literal statement, precept, example, proverb, disquisition, epistle, sermon, prayer—in short, all rational shapes of human discourse—and treating, moreover, of subjects not obvious, but most difficult—its authors are not found, like other writers, contradicting one another upon the most ordinary matters of fact and opinion, but are at harmony upon the whole of their sublime and momentous scheme.”\*

Finally, as it has penetrated human life, and shaped human experience, so this Book of books has found its way, in its letter or in its spirit, into all other living books. The principles it inculcates are the conserving elements of living literature, whether in prose or verse. Bible truth is the floating power of books whose mere literary merit would not otherwise have saved them. Many a literary argosy, richly freighted with a choice cargo of human thoughts, has perished, and hardly a waif from the wreck, inscribed with the name of the vessel, has drifted to the shores of the present hour; while many a rudely constructed bark, rendered weather and storm-proof by the heavenly truth it carried, has passed triumphantly through the tempest, and

• MacLagan.

is yet discharging its cargo on the strands of the present age.

Such considerations, though not of the highest, may well prompt us to render a diligent obedience to the Saviour's command, "*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and these are they which testify of Me.*"

**"Marked with the seal of high Divinity,  
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love  
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry  
And signature of God Almighty stamped  
From first to last;—this ray of sacred light,  
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne  
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time  
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;  
And evermore beseeching men, with tears  
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live."**†

• Pollok.

# **XIII.**

## **NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.**



### XIII.

#### *NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.*

##### FROM BEERSHEBA TO JERUSALEM.



SOME years ago I was standing by the side of a glass case in the geological department of the British Museum, listening, with about thirty others, to the discourse of one of the tutors of the college in which I was at that time a student ; when, seeing this little crowd, and wondering what the attraction was, a country-woman—fresh from the provinces, and now *doing* London under the guidance of a city cousin—elbowed her way into our midst. Great was her astonishment when she saw only a case filled with quartz or fossils, and great was our amusement when we heard her exclaim, as she elbowed her way out again, “ Hey, dear ! why it’s nothing but a heap of old stones.” So to the uninitiated and uninterested this chapter on Scripture Archæology will seem little else than a “ heap of old stones ;” but to those who can find “ sermons in stones ” we can venture to



promise that "the stones of Palestine" shall yield as much of romantic incident as "the stones of Venice;" while to the *Bible student*, who travels—whether in fact or in fancy—through the Holy Land with a question on his lips at every step, a reply full of historical incident and of moral suggestiveness shall be given; "for the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Biblical Archæology is a subject so vast in its more restricted sense, and has of late been made to include so much, that, in two brief chapters, I could hardly do more than summarize the whole; or, with a greater amplitude of detail, confine myself to one branch in particular. This latter plan will, I believe, be more interesting and instructive to my young readers; just as I believe that a hungry man would derive more satisfaction from the discussion of one slice cut from one limb of an ox than he would from the contemplation of all the bones of the animal, however definitely they might be articulated by the skill of the anatomist.

Archæology has been defined to be "an explanation of those ancient monuments in which former nations have left us the traces or records of their religion, history, politics, arts, and sciences." Bibli-

cal Archæology is, therefore, an explanation of such monuments as belong to the nations referred to in the Bible. Those nations comprise, as you are aware, many more than simply the Jewish people. They include the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans, as well as the race of Abraham in the two great lines of Isaac and Ishmael. The monuments of those nations include their architectural remains, their literary treasures, their public and domestic institutions, their religious rites and ceremonies, their commercial and industrial transactions; in short, all that we usually sum up by the comprehensive term—*antiquities*. From a very cursory glance at any article under the word Archæology in almost any Biblical Encyclopædia it will be at once manifest that the whole subject would require for its worthy treatment many goodly volumes, rather than a small fraction of one small book.

From the motive already named I will therefore restrict myself to one limited but interesting branch of this great subject, and will proceed to jot down a few notes on the *architectural* remains that, in the form of well and fountain, of crumbling wall and disintegrated and unidentified heap of mouldering stones, lie thickly strewn over Palestine and its neighbourhood.

Let us not forget, as we pursue our hurried journey from Beersheba to Dan, that others have been here before us, and have left their traces behind them,—traces as bewildering as the autographs, and monograms, and senseless hieroglyphics cut—with Sheffield whittle by Brown, and Jones, and Robinson—in the sandstone cliffs of the written valley. The memory of this will teach us to be careful how we identify the Moorish tomb now standing over the sepulchre of Rachel with the original monument erected by the loving hands of Jacob ; or the ruins of the church of St. John at Samaria, a relic of mediæval times, and the Herodian colonnades around it, with the original erections of Omri, king of Israel.

Walking, some time ago, round the walls of the old city of Chester, I noted that the parapet, over which I glanced at the spot once occupied by the parliamentary forces, was in many places built, as it were, but yesterday ; a little further down in the old grey walls might be distinguished the work of masons who had repaired the ravages of war and time from the Norman Conquest and onwards ; while, lower still, might be traced, here and there, some few courses of stone with which, indubitably, those famous builders, the Romans, had surrounded

their original *castrum*. Local wiseacres may speak of those walls as pure Roman; but one has to exercise a judicious discrimination. Those who reside on the spot, notwithstanding their pretensions on that account, are often but ill-informed in matters of local history; as a certain "shepherd of Salisbury Plain," for example, who told John Foster, in the presence of a friend of mine, that Stonehenge was once a magnificent temple in which the former inhabitants worshipped the devil! "I ought to know," he added, "because I was born in these parts, and have lived here all my life." Many of the Arabs of Edom believe to this day that the rock city of Petra was the work of gins and demons. The Arabs of the Holy Land may be listened to with deferential courtesy, but their tales must be received for what they are worth, and that is often very little. In Palestine the traveller finds the whole region bristling with local traditions and monkish legends; and an almost impenetrable entanglement of fabulous stories will sometimes effectually guard and conceal the truth for which he is searching, as with a hedge of interlacing branches and exasperating thorns.

Proceeding with a not too-credulous mind, we pitch our tents, on entering Palestine from the

south, at a spot about midway between the lower limb of the Dead Sea on our right; and the Mediterranean on our left; with our faces toward Jerusalem on the north. The *Fellahin*, or peasant, whose wondering looks may well remind us of the surprise with which a flock of sheep will sometimes contemplate a railway train, call the spot *Bir-es-Seba*. Can this be *Beer-Sheba*, "The well of the oath"? If so, where is the well? See, already our servants are drawing water for our camp uses. Joining them, our measuring line tells us that this well is about five feet and a half across, and about forty-two feet deep to the surface of the water. "The water is clear and good. The *Bir* itself is as old as Abraham; and this is probably the well dug by him (Gen. xxi. 30); but the present masonry of the mouth is more uncertain. It may be Abrahamic; it may be Jewish; it may be Roman; it may be Christian; it may be Mohammedan: who shall say which?"\* About a hundred yards to the right is another well, the same in depth, but about ten feet across. This was most likely dug by Isaac, whose larger flocks and the increasing population of his day may have demanded a more ample supply of water than the

\* Dr. Bonar.

older well yielded. The Bible does not, indeed, say that there were *two* wells; but it does tell us that "Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged."\* As we pass round the "cup of cold water," refreshing to the thirsty traveller as good news from a far country, we call to mind that the Arabic *Bir* of the modern map is equivalent to the Hebrew *Beer* of Old Testament history. Whenever you meet with that prefix you may be pretty sure that something about a well is bound up with the story of the person or place to whose name that prefix is added. We find *Beer*, pure and simple, in two places. *Beer-elim*, "the well of heroes," in another. *Beer-i*, identical with Anah, was the man who found the warm springs in the wilderness.† About ten miles north of Jerusalem we found a heap of ruins called

\* Gen. xxvi. 32; see also Gen. xxvi. 23—25.

† The word translated *mules*—*yémén*—is found only in Gen. xxxvi. 24; at that time horses were unknown, and hence mules could not have been "found" there (*Michaelis*). Gesenius and others say *yémén* = hot springs. Hence the text reads, "This was that Anah, who, while he was feeding his father's asses in the desert, found some hot springs." This translation is now generally accepted as correct. The springs may be those to which Herod went for a cure (*Josephus, Antiq.* xvii. vi. 55), and are probably the En-eglaim (*fountain of the two calves*) of Ezek. xlvii. 10, at the north-east end of the Dead Sea.—*Topics for Teachers.*

*el-Birch*, doubtless the *Beeroth* of the Hivites, and said to have been the place where Jesus was first missed by his parents. Behind us is the ancient *Beerôth-bene-Iaakan*, that is, "the wells of the sons of Iaakan;" and a little in front, but rather to the left, is *Beer-lahai-roi*, "the well of the Living One that sees me," where the angel's words yielded to Hagar a greater refreshment than even its thirst-quenching waters; and where, in after days, Isaac—meditating at eventide—went out at the sound of the camel bells to enjoy his first meeting with Rebekah; suggesting to all young courting couples the wisdom of remembering, at every trysting place, "the Living One who sees" them.

Leaving "the well of the oath," we begin to *climb up* the barrier of the hills of Judæa, every step of the toilsome ascent giving emphasis to the expression, "They went *down* into Egypt."\* Still climbing and advancing northwards over the barren and boulder-strewn limestone hills, past the remains of some ancient city whose origin dates back further than Roman, or Jewish, or even than patriarchal history, and wherein of old some of the mighty race of Anak dwelt—dismembered ruins that in Sicily we should relegate to the time of the

• Dr. Stanley.

Cyclops\*—we approach Hebron. Called aforetime *Kirjath-Arba*, "the city of Arba," because it was the residence of that Arba who was the ancestor of the Anakim; known as Hebron in early Bible story, and now named *el-Kuhil*, "the friend," in remembrance of that "friend of God," whose burial-place, "the cave of Machpelah," was here. (In passing, we may remind our readers that the word *Kirjath*, so often met with in the topography of the Land of Promise, signifies "city.") Although the present mosque of Hebron is by no means that by which Abraham marked the place—if, indeed, he erected any building here,—it undoubtedly marks the site of the ancient cave, and is itself of great antiquity. Within this enclosure the Prince of Wales and Dr. Stanley penetrated in 1862. No other European, except two or three in disguise, had been permitted to enter since 1187. When they entered the building, of which the external measurement, as given by Robinson and Pierotti, is about two hundred feet by one hundred and fifty feet, whose height is fifty feet, whose stones are some of them thirty-eight feet long, and form a wall of six feet and a half in thickness, what there did they find? They discovered a spacious oblong

\* Dr. Bonar.



quadrangle surmounted by several domes, and surrounded by broad passages containing the shrines of Joseph, Jacob, and Leah. The quadrangle itself is divided into two pretty nearly equal parts. The one nearer to the entrance contains the shrines of Isaac and Rebekah ; the other those of Abraham and Sarah. These shrines are separate chapels, closed with gates or railings similar to those which surround the chapels or royal tombs in Westminster Abbey. The shrine of Abraham, guarded by silver gates, is a chamber cased with marble. The so-called tomb consists of a coffin-like structure about six feet high, built up of plastered stone or marble, and hung with three green and gold embroidered carpets.\* The dead, in whose honour these cenotaphs have been erected, are supposed to repose beneath. But where is the cave? Well, just in front of the wall which divides the quadrangle, and at that corner of it opposite to which is the shrine of Abraham, there is in the ground a small circular hole about eight inches across, of which the upper surrounding surface is strong masonry, and the lower part, so far as can be seen and felt, is the living rock. Over this hole a lamp is suspended, which at night is said to be let down to burn on the

• Dr. Stanley.

sacred grave of "the Father of the Faithful." This cavity appears to open into a dark space beneath, and that space, which the guardians of the mosque believe to extend under the whole platform, can hardly be anything else than the cave of Machpelah.

Leaving Hebron by the highroad to Jerusalem, twenty-two miles away to the north, we see in the dim distance on the right the faint outline of the hills of Moab ; in a valley on the other side of which was found, a little while ago, one of the most interesting of recently discovered relics. Until a recent date few Europeans had so much as penetrated that mysterious region ; but rumours of extraordinary ruins had come to the ears of bibliologists and geographers ; and now Captain Warren, the agent of the Palestine Exploration Society, has obtained, and secured to the British Museum, a monumental stone covered with most curious inscriptions. When the Arabs heard that the Franks were inquiring about their well-known monolith, they broke it into several pieces, and hid it away in their corn-pits. But, what between Captain Warren and the French consulate, all the fragments have been recovered, and tracings, or "squeezes," of two portions have been already submitted to Mr. Deutsch, the accomplished

Shemitic scholar. This gentleman has discovered, imperfect as are the sub-Phœnician characters, the title of "*Mesha king of Moab*," with a list of the cities that "*I built*," among which are many biblical names, like those of *Beth-bamoth*, *Horonaim*, *Dhibon*, and *Beth-Baal-Meon*. Here then, no doubt, is a contemporaneous pillar of that Moabite king whose bloody deeds are recorded in Scripture. It is a living witness to that scene of dark and unspeakable superstition, the offering of human sacrifice to propitiate the gods of his country. He who carved it consummated that same horrible offering to "*Chemosh of the Moabites*;" and no page of the world's history could better explain, than does this *lithographed* one, how the mildest and noblest faith of humanity has ever had to fight its way over the ruins of old and devilish beliefs. Mr. Groves, one of the contributors to Smith's Biblical Dictionary, remarks: "(1) If the stone be a Moabite record, it is the first fragment of the literature of that people that has just been encountered; and (2) if the '*Mesha*' whose name appears in the first line is the hero of the tragical story of 2 Kingsiii., then we have, indeed, a discovery which may well make us stand breathless till the whole document be deciphered." To find a passage of Moabite chronicle, parallel in

date to a portion of the Bible, is an event of no mean importance ; and it should stimulate us to further researches in the same direction.

Meditating on that wonderful stone, we pass Ramah, and presently arrive at *Beth-lehem*. Here I would submit to the notice of the young Bible student another prefix that may serve as a guide to the meaning of many other names of places in Palestine. Let me pave the way by an illustration. In England there are many places with the word *castrum*, in its anglicised form, interwoven with their names ; such as Ilchester, Dorchester, Winchester, Chichester, Rochester, Doncaster, Manchester, and the like. Now, as the Roman word *castrum* signified "*a fortified camp*," we know that in these places the Romans had their military stations at the time when this country was under their rule, and that the towns whose names have *castrum* interwoven were of Roman origin. So in England, also, we have such particles as "*wick*," "*by*," or "*ham*" interwoven also in the names of places ; such as Berwick, Alnwick, Appleby, Derby, Southampton, Northampton, etc. "*Wick*" occurs more in the north, and is of Norse origin ; "*by*" occurs more in the midland and north-east, and is of Danish paternity ; while "*ham*" is found chiefly in the

south and south-east, and is Saxon. Now each of these words signifies a *dwelling* or *home*; and they aid us very considerably in tracing the occupancy of the ancient inhabitants of Britain. In like manner we have in the nomenclature of Scripture many places with the prefix "*Beth*," the ordinary Hebrew word for *house* or *dwelling*, and of which the modern Arabic equivalent is "*Beit*." Hence we have *Bethany*, "the house of dates;" *Bethphage*, "the house of figs;" *Bethel*, "the house of God;" *Bethoron*, "the house in the hollow," etc. This *Bethlehem*, or "house of bread," as the name signifies, was the centre of the great corn country of the south. You will remember that it was hither that Ruth came in the "end of the barley harvest," and where she gleaned in the fields of Boaz. So fertile was this region that sometimes it was called *Ephratah*, or "fruitful;" and sometimes the two words are combined into the superlative *Bethlehem-Ephratah*; that is to say, "the house of bread, the fruitful." Truly, a singularly appropriate name for the native place of *Him* who is the inexhaustible "bread of life" for the spiritually hungry world.

About a mile further on our attention is attracted by a small building of very distinct Mohammedan origin, known as "Rachel's tomb." There is no

reason to doubt the site, and one cannot help being thankful that the Mohammedans have even such a superstitious veneration for the worthies of Jewish history, as, from time to time, to have repaired or rebuilt in their own style many of the old Hebrew monuments. Travellers who have penetrated the wall of the external building have found that it was erected over a previous structure, itself raised over a third building that now lies, a heap of crumbling stones, in the centre of the whole.

Before us, still to the north, about five miles off, is *el-Kuds*, "the Holy City;" our Arab guides sometimes call it *Beit el-Makdis*, "the holy house." The prophet called it (Isa. xxix. 1, 2; cf. Ezek xlii. 16) *Ariel*, "the lion of God." The emperor Hadrian (Aelius Hadrianus), who rebuilt a portion of it, called it *Aelia Capitolina*; and to this day we may find these two names of the emperor inscribed in a stone in the south wall of the Aksa, one of the few Roman relics about which there can be no dispute. The Hebrews called it *Yerushalaim*. The name most familiar to us is that which it most frequently bears in the Holy Scriptures—*Jerusalem*.



## **XIV.**

### **NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.**





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### *NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.*

FROM JERUSALEM TO THE HAURAN.

T would fill several chapters to enumerate and describe the numerous matters of archæological interest in this one place alone. I must content myself with saying a word or two about only two or three of them, and especially about some of the more recent explorations.

Most of the old cities of the world are now under ground. If, for example, London could be swept away, and an army of "navvies" were to turn up the ground for from six to twenty feet below the present foundations, they would arrive at, as partial excavations have clearly proved, the foundations of the old Roman city ; and lay bare the streets and tessellated pavements of ancient houses and temples.

" Captain Warren, as is well known, has been industriously uncovering the roads of the ancient city. His subterranean labours have revealed what may be termed stratified Jewish history. He has gone

down as much as ninety feet in one spot ; and at the corner of the Haram especially, at the depth of eighty feet, he has disclosed the foundation stones of the old Temple, standing upon the living rock, besides chambers, walls, aqueducts, cisterns, and arches ; which begin, after incredible toil, to range themselves into an intelligible plan, revealing to us the real Jerusalem of the past. At the foot of the south-east rampart, which now supports the mosques of Omar and Aksa, have been unveiled stones bearing letters incised with a chisel, or painted in red. These have been studied by Mr. Deutsch, and declared to be the construction marks of the Phœnician masons who built the Temple. The fac-similes of them, thus far brought home, are very much like the first attempts of a small school-boy to make figures on a slate ; but they are assuredly of immense antiquity, and no doubt they represent the actual memoranda of the stone layers of Tyre and Sidon, 'who took the contract' from Solomon to build his temple. To enumerate the various articles—as Jewish weights—made of stone, and elaborately carved with arabesques, lamps, vases, and other articles of ceramic ware, would occupy much space. There is an especially striking round-bellied vessel from 'Robinson's arch,'

discovered at seventy-two feet below the surface, of dark red clay, and almost as thin as biscuit china. It may have held the 'fine flour mingled with oil,' or the 'drink-offering of wine, the fourth part of a bin,' presented when 'Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, was porter towards the east, over the precious offerings' in the reign of Hezekiah. From the same spot, and indeed from many others in these workings, have been sent a large number of tiny earthenware lamps. One glance at these recognizes them as identical with the Arab *assiras* which our guides use throughout our travels. They are little pear-shaped flattened things, the like of which almost a tool mark may be bought at Nazareth, at the rate of three for a piastre. Mr. Vaux, I believe, of the British Museum, pronounces the greater part of them to be of about the date 150 B.C. ; and doubtless it was just such a domestic article which met the eye of *Him* who told the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and counselled all to have their 'loins girded, and their lamps burning.' With these are mingled some curious little jars of a more primitive type, believed to be Sidonian ; though, as they are exactly of the same shade of colour, and made apparently of the same clay, they may, as likely as not, have been

Jewish vessels to contain oil or essences, in religious or domestic use. Under Mount Zion have been found spindle-shaped vessels, small, and possessing the character of 'lachrymatories.' If these were tear bottles, they may have belonged to the class to which David refers in that familiar passage in which his Divine Friend is spoken of as treasuring his tears (Ps. lvi. 8). Among the most ancient of these remains may be noticed 'a saucer-shaped piece of good manufacture and perfect glaze, which exactly resembles the articles made in the Punjaub to hold camels' milk cheese, though it may very well be, for aught we know, the identical 'lordly dish' in which Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, brought butter to Sisera—preserved in the Temple, or one of the 'empties' not returned to the Queen of Sheba after her celebrated visit with so many presents to the spot which is here for the first time laid bare after four thousand years." Ascending from these subterranean regions, we stand at length on the site of the Temple itself. Above us is the dome of the "Sakrah," and at our feet is one of the most remarkable objects of interest in Jerusalem. Projecting for about five feet above the marble pavement is a strange bald rock some sixty feet long by fifty feet broad. It appears

to be the natural surface of Mount Moriah. Marks of chiseling may be seen in various parts; at its south-eastern corner there is an excavated chamber, to which access is gained by a flight of stone steps, and an aperture through the rocky roof. This chamber, of irregular form and with an average height of seven feet, is capable of accommodating fifty persons. In its centre there is a circular slab of marble, which, on being struck, emits a hollow sound suggestive of an excavation or a well beneath. Many have been the curious speculations to which this rock has given birth. Some, as Mr. Fergusson, have suggested that it was the rock of the Holy Sepulchre: others have supposed it to be a part of the rock on which once stood the fortress of Antonia. Professor Willis urges "its claim to be the rock overhanging the threshing-floor of Araunah, selected by David, and afterwards continued by Solomon and Zerubbabel, as the 'unhewn stone' on which to build the altar; the cave within being the sink described in the Talmud as that into which blood and offal of the sacrifices were drained off." "One argument which Professor Willis has omitted in favour of his position may be noticed. In 1 Chron. xxi. 20, 21, it is said that 'Ornan and his four sons *hid themselves*,' apparently

within the threshing-floor : for it is added that, as David came to Ornan, '*Ornan looked and went out of the threshing-floor.*' Possibly it was customary to have a cave under the rock of the threshing-floor to conceal the corn—as in the case of Gideon in the wine-press under the rock of Ophrah, where the altar was afterwards raised." \* Meanwhile the rock remains, whatever be its origin, the most curious monument of Old Jerusalem, and not the least so, from the unrivalled variety of associations which it has gathered to itself in the vicissitudes of centuries. But we must not linger longer in the Holy City.

And as we have much ground yet to traverse, we must not turn to the right as we leave Jerusalem to visit Jericho and *Ain-Sultan*, or, as it is called by some "the fountain of Elisha ;" the road to which "city of palm-trees" being down hill all the thirteen miles to a point 3,624 feet below the level of the highest point of Jerusalem. So literally did the man who "fell among thieves" go "*down*" on his way to Jericho. Yet, even here, as we take our way to the ancient Sychar, I would pause to remind you that the "*Ain*" you so frequently encounter as a prefix to names of places on modern maps of the

\* Dr. Stanley.

Holy Land, is the Arabic form of the old Hebrew *En*, which signifies "a fountain." Thus, the witch whom Saul, forsaken of God, consulted, lived at *Endor*, "the fountain of the dwelling." *En-eglaim* means "the fountain of the two calves." *En-gannân* signifies "the fountain of gardens." *En-gedi*, the place so famous in the early history of David, was "the fountain of the kid." The frequent recurrence of *Beer* and *En* in the names of Hebrew localities, shows the high repute in which a pastoral people held wells and fountains, just as their *Beth*, and the Saxon *ham*, is suggestive of the ancient recognition of the truth that "there is no place like home."

Crossing the head of the *Wady Kelt*, which is really what its name imports, "a *cutting*" in the lime-stone rocks down amid the oleander shrubberies and cavernous sides of which the Tishbite concealed himself from the rage of Ahab, we push on to the centre of Palestine, leaving Gibeon on the right, through Bethel, leaving Shiloh on the left with Lebanah opposite ; and after a march of forty miles from Jerusalem, we encamp at the entrance of a valley stretching out towards the left. Immediately before us is Mount Ebal, behind us is Mount Gerizim, and the opening in the ground, around



which we have formed our encampment, is Jacob's well. If my primary intention in this chapter were to be devotional, or experimental, or doctrinal, I should here recommend you to pause, and read certain portions of the Book of Genesis, and the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John; my purpose being, however, archæological, we have less to do with Jacob who dug the well, or with Joseph who sought his brethren in this valley, or with the solitary scholar in the class of the Great Teacher, than with the material surroundings of the place. That white Mussulman chapel close upon us covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, buried thus in the "parcel of ground" which his father bequeathed to him. That little chapel which you see about a quarter of a mile off, towards the slope of Gerizim is also shown as the tomb of Joseph, and is said by the Samaritans to be so called after Rabbi Joseph of Nâblus. Of course you will not have forgotten that we were shown the shrine of Joseph in the mosque at Hebron. The burial of Joseph at Shechem is very distinctly mentioned in Josh. xxiv. 32; and this seems to be confirmed by the somewhat perplexing statement in Acts vii. 15, 16. According to the general tradition of the country, justified, perhaps, as Dr. Stanley suggests, by an

ambiguous expression of Josephus,\* the body of Joseph, after having been deposited first at Shechem, was subsequently transported to Hebron. The guardian of the mosque accounted for the shrine of Joseph being there by the story that Joseph was buried in the Nile, and that Moses recovered the body, 1,005 years afterwards, by marrying an Egyptian wife who knew the secret. Glancing at the twin mountains, and measuring at the same time the distance between them, "Was it possible," we ask, "that the voices of the Levites, reading the curses and blessings of the law could be heard across this valley?" Yes; for in recent times the experiment has been often tried, and with demonstrative success. Mr. Mills, for example, tells us† that he ascended Gerizim, while a friend stood on Ebal, and as he read out the blessings, his friend on Ebal heard them, and then read the curses with a corresponding result: "We all heard every word and syllable." Again he says: "One day, when passing down the valley, we heard two shepherds holding a conversation. One was on the top of Gerizim, out of sight, and the other was close to us in the valley." There before us is Sychar, the ancient Shechem,—to whose folly-stricken inhabitants Jo-

\* "Antiquities," ii. 8. 2.

† Nâblus, 58 ff.

tham shrieked out his warning parable from one of the lofty precipices that literally overhang the city. The *dramatis personæ* of his parable were all before him. First, there was the olive, the special tree of Nâblus, clearly marked out as the rightful sovereign; next to this would follow the rarer but still commanding fig tree, and the trailing festoons of the vine; last of all, the briar or bramble, whose worthless branches are still used for the fire-wood of the sacrificial oven, and whose unsightly bareness contrasts on the hill-side with the rich verdure of his nobler brethren."\* "Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as everybody knows who has listened to the *public crier* of the villages of Lebanon. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant cornfields, he ascends the mountain-side above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and there 'lifts up his voice, and cries,' as Jotham did; and he gives forth his message with such distinctness that all can hear him, and understand it. Indeed, the people in these mountain countries are able, from long practice, so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across enormous wadies, and give the most

\* Dr. Stanley, "Sinai and Palestine," 240.

minute directions, which are perfectly understood ; and in doing this they seem to speak very little louder than their usual tone of conversation."\* In the Samaritan synagogue at Sychar, or Nâblus, as it is now called, is a venerable Pentateuch roll, said to have been written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas (1 Chron. vi. 3, 4), or nearly 3,500 years old. "It is a regular *volumen*, 'a thing rolled and unrolled,' a *Megillah* such as that which Jeremiah took, and Baruch wrote in, and Jehudi fetched, and Jehoiakim cut with his penknife, and burned in the fire of his winter house (Jer. xxxvi. 2, 4, 27)."†

A few miles further on, and on the other side of Ebal, are the remains of Samaria, the ancient capital of Israel, now called *Sefústieh*. Here we find the valley strangely diversified with the crumbling ruins of many edifices, of many dates, of many builders. Some few of those stones may have been wrought by Omri's masons. That colonnade, numbering with the prostrate and broken columns nearly three hundred majestic pillars, was the work of Herod. Those circular, buttressed walls are the remnants of the church of St. John, erected in

\* Dr. Thomson, "Land and Book," 473; Dr. Bonar's "Land of Promise," 371.

† Dr. Bonar.

mediæval times, one of the numerous footprints of crusading armies. It must have been a noble city. "Set on a hill, in the midst of a vast mountainous amphitheatre, ten miles at least in diameter, it cannot be hid. On every side it is visible, and in former days, with its circling colonnades and towering temples, it must have looked surpassingly noble. There is nothing like it even in Palestine, whose hills and valleys seem as if specially laid out as sites for castles, and palaces, and cities."

Hurrying on past Dothan, which we leave on our left ; with En-Jeddîn, "the fountain of gardens," on our right ; glancing at the mountains of Gilboa on the one hand, and the flowery slopes of Carmel on the other, we traverse the plain of Esdraelon, the old battle-ground of Syria ; and at length find ourselves wandering amid the principal scenes in the life of our Lord. Galilee is strewn all over with heaps of ruins, separated from each other by sundry hills of no great elevation, and occasionally still showing feeble signs of life, where mean Arab towns and hamlets—some of them bearing yet the ancient names—mark the sites of what were once populous and powerful cities. This little heap of ruins, called *Nain*, is unquestionably the ancient *Nain*, and it is

"in keeping with one historic incident (Luke vii. 11—17) that renders it dear to the Christian, that its only antiquities are tombs." \* Whether yonder little modern village of *Kenna*, four miles and a half north-west of Nazareth, or the deserted village of *Kânâ-el-Fell* was the scene of the first miracle, no one can now positively declare. *Nazareth*, now called *en-Nazirah*, with its 3,000 inhabitants, may be recognized sleeping amid its fifteen gently rounded hills, that "seem as if they had met to form an enclosure for this peaceful basin; they rise round it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion." † In the words of the old topographer, Quaresmius, "Nazareth is a rose, and, like a rose, has the same rounded form, enclosed by mountains as the flower by its leaves." The poor inhabitants, to whom all travellers suggest a harvest, rush out on our approach, and carry us off to the cave of annunciation, and the kitchen of Mary, and the workshop of Joseph, and the dining-table of our Lord and His disciples, and the synagogue where He read the prophet Isaiah. And then we turn away from their foolish tales, and fond traditions, and clamours for *backshish*, and climb the mount of precipitation, a cliff about forty feet high, in the abrupt face of

\* Dr. Thomson.

† Dr. Stanley.

the limestone rock at the south-west corner of the town, and reflect, as we look down upon Nazareth, how nearly infidelity and superstition are allied; and contrast the ancient rejection of the Lord of truth by His own townsmen with the vehement protestations of the genuineness of the table, and the workshop, by the present wretched inhabitants of the place. Not unnatural is it that our thoughts should wander off to other people, who, by the way, would treat these Nazarenes with majestic scorn, and yet seem to have far more faith in the wooden utterances of their neighbours' tables, than in the "lively oracles" that lie neglected on their own; nor strange may it be thought if, as the wind-up of such reflections, we should take the New Testament from our wallet, and note how Paul with an inspired prescience had anticipated the "lying wonders" of modern times (2 Thess. ii. 7—12).

From Nazareth, journeying towards the east and south, we begin, after a few miles of gently undulated country, to climb Mount Tabor, the scene of many a notable event. Here it was that Barak collected his forces; and hence it was that, at the bidding of Deborah, he and his men rushed like a torrent down upon Sisera (Judges iv. 6, 12—14). Here it was that, according to tradition, our Lord

was transfigured ; and saying so tradition proves—and not for the first time—that it has erred. For not only was Christ at Cæsarea Philippi a little while before (Matt. xvi. 13), but at that time the summit of Mount Tabor was occupied by a fortified town. As we stand here, 1,900 feet above the level of the sea, we find ourselves surrounded by “a confused mass of broken walls, towers, vaults, cisterns, and houses, some of which indicate the sites of the convents and churches erected by the crusaders.” \* Erected by them, probably, out of the ruins of previous edifices.

Descending Tabor, and continuing our journey eastwards, we cross the Jordan between the Jarmûk, flowing into the Jordan, on the right hand ; and the sea of Galilee to the left and north. Pushing our way still eastwards, through the forests of walnut and cherry and apricot trees that grow on the edge of the ravine, through which, at a depth of 250 feet, the Jarmûk flows, we found ourselves presently in the Hauran, called in all the old and larger works on Palestine and Syria, “*Job's fatherland.*”

• Dr. Thomson.





## **XV.**

### **NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.**



## XV.

### NOTABLE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE.

FROM THE HAURAN, THROUGH BASHAN AND LEBANON, TO  
THE COAST OF TYRE AND SIDON.

N the Hauran we constantly hear of "the patient man." We remark upon the fruitfulness of the district, and one of the Arabs replies, "Is it not the land of Job?" (*bilād Êjûb*); or "Does it not belong to the villages of Job?" (*diâ Êjûb*). The Arabs told Scetzen that *Bozra* was "a city of Job;" and Eli Smith was informed that the country, for miles around, was "the land of Job." "What is that great building yonder?"—we are pointing to a structure belonging to the Roman or Byzantine period. The peasants reply, "The summer palace of Job." We encamp at night at *Dâ'il*, and the shepherds say that the place of our encampment was "Job's pasture ground." When Buckingham saw in the distance the village of *Gherbi*, his attendants told him that

"it was the birthplace and residence of Job."\* Indeed, it seems as though the *Hauran* and "the land of Job" are synonymous. How came all these traditions? I do not believe that the "man of Uz" built that palace. I have grave and reasonable doubts concerning many other ruins that bear his name; for, notwithstanding he was "greatest of all the men of the east," the architecture is too manifestly modern, as compared with that of the days of Abraham, whose contemporary he was. Yet there may be some basis of truth for all these local stories, as we know there is for the traditions concerning the patriarchs and Jesus to which we listened on the other side of the river. To this day the Hauran is, perhaps, the most fertile district in that part of the East. It was in this region that Dr. Porter "rode in one day for more than twenty miles in a straight course through the flocks of an Arab tribe." Nearly in the same district it was that the same traveller "came upon a poor gipsy crouching in terror beneath a shattered wall. He was the only living being in Arethusa, and his tale was sad enough. The day before he was rich and happy, the head of a numerous family, and of an attached tribe; now he was alone and a beggar.

\* See Delitzsch on Job. Appendix ii. 395.

The tents of his people had been pitched on the banks of the Orontes ; their camels and goats were feeding on the plain. A troop of Anezeh came suddenly upon them, and swept them all away—camels, goats, tents, women and children. . . . Property is as insecure still on the borders of the Arabian desert as it was in the days of Job.”\* (Job i. 14, 15.)

Now that we are on the east of the Jordan, and intend to finish our travels by going round the head of the sea of Galilee, it will be worth our while to pay a hasty visit to Argob.

Leaving “the land of Job” behind us in the south, we inquire for the land of the ruined cities of the giants. I read (Deut. iii. 4, 5, 14) that in Argob, one of the little provinces of Bashan, Jair took no less than *sixty great cities*, “fenced with high walls, gates, and bars ; besides unwalled towns a great many.” Of course the arithmetic of Dr. Colenso would prove the statement to be incredible ; for how could a province, thirty miles by twenty, support so many, especially when the greater part of it was a wilderness of rock ? Let us go and see for ourselves. We ride on through the richly watered plain, musing on “the patience of Job,” till by-and-by, as the shadows of evening

\* “Giant Cities of Bashan,” 307.

gather round us, we begin to ascend a rocky barrier, surrounding a great platform of basalt on which the giant cities are to be found, if found at all. As the darkness thickens, and the gloom becomes impenetrable, we are conscious—by the ringing of the horses hoofs on the hard rocky ground—that we have left the grassy slopes behind us, and are stumbling on through the gloom over a hard and barren floor. The rain drifts in our faces, so that we can see nothing, and the moon has not yet risen. We ask our Arab guide if there is any spot where we can get shelter from the rain. He tells us that there is a house ready for us, and close at hand. “A house! Is there a house here?” “Hundreds of them,” is the ready and startling answer. In wondering silence we still mount up a steep ascent, which, from the way our horses climb and stumble, must be somewhat like a ruined staircase, and at length the dark outlines of high walls appear against the sky; and presently we enter a paved street. Here we dismount, and an Arab striking a light, and inviting us to follow, we pass through a low, gloomy doorway into a spacious chamber. While our evening meal is being prepared, let us seize a torch, and explore our lodgings. The walls are perfect, and nearly five feet in thickness. They

are built of large blocks of hewn stone, laid without lime or cement of any kind. The roof is formed of large slabs of stone twelve feet long, and eighteen inches broad, and six inches thick. These slabs rest upon a cornice which projects for about a foot from each of the side walls. The room is twenty feet long, and twelve feet broad, and ten feet high. The outer door is a vast slab of stone, four and a half feet high, four feet wide, and eight inches thick. Notwithstanding that it is so massive, the pivots working in the lintel and threshold are so skillfully made that we can open and close it with ease. At one end of the room there is a small window with a stone shutter ; at the other end there is another door, also of stone. See, it communicates with another chamber, in size and construction like the one we have left. At the far end of this room there is a larger door. Whither does it lead ? Mind ! There is a flight of steps. Down we go, carefully, and wondering whither they will lead us. We stand in a spacious hall, twenty-five long by twenty high. Our reverie is ruthlessly disturbed by a voice summoning us to supper. As we sit down to it in the room we first entered, we cannot help reflecting that the original occupants must have been a stalwart race to have needed



an apartment of ten feet high. The more so since men were not wont in those days to build rooms much higher than they absolutely needed ; and since the lifting about of stones so vast must have been a toilsome work even with modern appliances. Still the men who built the Pyramids were not a gigantic race ; hence we must be guarded in our inferences. Supper despatched, we wrap our rugs around us, and lie down to sleep, and dream of mighty King Og, and wonder if his bedstead of iron were not constructed of the black basalt on the iron floor of which we were stretching our weary limbs.

The morning comes at last, and, mounting our camels and horses once more, we set out over the island of basalt, and travel on from mile to mile from one deserted city to another. Owls fly round the grey towers, foxes and jackals rush away from us into the empty houses ; and as we wend our way through these miles of silent streets the words of the prophet come to mind : " Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there ; and satyrs shall dance there."\* " One of these cities alone is five miles in circuit ; its walls are

\* Isaiah xiii. 21.

lofty and massive, and its castle one of the largest and strongest fortresses in Syria. Among the *more modern* ruins we find the remains of two theatres, six temples, ten or twelve churches and mosques, besides palaces, baths, fountains, aqueducts, triumphal arches, and other great and beautiful buildings, some of which grace the proudest capitals of modern Europe." "There can be little doubt," adds Dr. Porter, in another place, "that these are the very cities erected and inhabited by the Rephaim, the aboriginal inhabitants of Bashan." And the language of Carl Ritter appears to be true: "These buildings remain as eternal witnesses of the conquest of Bashan by Jehovah."

Still pursuing our way northwards, and leaving Argob behind us, we arrive, after a ten or twelve miles' march, at Damascus. Famous in Bible story, bound up with the history of Abraham and David and Solomon, of Naaman and Elisha and Saul of Tarsus, it is still what Isaiah called it, "the head of Syria;" while Babylon is a heap in the desert, and Tyre is a ruin on the shore. Celebrated for its productions, both natural and industrial, Damascus has a conspicuous place in both profane and sacred story. While other cities have risen and decayed, it still retains those marks of beauty which caused

Mohammed, on beholding it, to exclaim—as he compared it with another paradise, and turned away reluctantly from the glorious city—"Man can have but one paradise in life: my paradise is fixed above;" which caused Lamartine to designate it "A predestined capital;" and Dr. Millman to call it "The queen of cities." No sword used by ancient warrior was counted equal to a good *Damascus blade*: among its textile fabrics one kind, called *damask*, is known to this day; its fruits and its flowers are famous as far as the luscious *Damascene plum* and the deep-dyed *damask rose* are known. The street "which is called *straight*," is still there—a narrow thoroughfare—in which the house of Judas, where Ananias met with Paul, is still pointed out. I can do as I please about believing it to be the very dwelling: as also I can about accepting the story as true, that that *Saracenic* wall contained the window—now conveniently walled up—whence the apostle was let down in a basket. I wonder they do not show me that rope and basket. Perhaps they are even now being manufactured for the wonderment of some future pilgrims. About forty yards in front of that walled-up gateway is a small cupola of wood, and the tomb beneath it—around which certain pilgrims are praying

yet for the soul of the departed—is said to contain the dust of St. George, the porter who helped Paul to escape. I can do as I please about believing that: as also I can when I am taken to a spot half a mile to the *east*, and told, that “the great apostle to the Gentiles was converted here.” I cannot help remarking that I thought it was on the great highroad coming from Jerusalem, when I am gravely informed that so it was believed till within the last century, when the spot on that road being judged to be too far distant for pilgrims to walk, or for holy fathers to conduct them; and that part of the city, moreover, being inhabited by bigoted Moslems, it has been deemed advisable of late to transfer the scene to the eastward! “Sceptics may smile at the absurdity of placing it on the east side of the city, while the great road to Jerusalem runs westward; but the faithful can reply, as some have done with regard to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, that the very unlikelihood of its situation forms a convincing argument for its genuineness!”\* To those who believe, all things are possible, it is said; but we must crave an exception in favour of the legends and traditions of the monks at Damascus.

\* Dr. Porter, “Five Years in Damascus,” i. 43:

Bidding adieu to the city of "the golden river," and those atrocious jokers, the "monks of old," we take our way westwards by a long and weary march through the passes of Lebanon to the sea coast. Here and there on those grim and silent mountains we stumble upon the remnants of some old altar where of old, as on Carmel, Baal had his high places. South of the road by which we travel is little Hermon, or some south-western spire of which was the scene of the transfiguration ; and far away to the north, past the ruins of Baalbec, is "the vale of cedars." We have not time to make a detour to "the city of the sun," but must press on to *Beirût*, where we take ship for a brief cruise along the coast. We pass Sidon, the mother of Tyre ; and Sarepta, the refuge of the fugitive prophet ; and cast our anchor in the roadstead of Tyre. But can this be Tyre ? *Nature* is beautiful enough, and flourishing as of old. "The gardens and orchards of Sidon are charming ; oranges, lemons, citrons, bananas, and palms grow luxuriantly, and give the environs of the old city a look of eternal spring." Indeed, the palm—*Phœnix dactylifera*—gave its name to Phœnicia, "the land of palms." But as for *art*, ruins are scattered at intervals all along the coast. Tombs, where await the last day the remains

of "the merchant princes," "dot the mountain side, and have already yielded a rich harvest to the antiquary of Phœnician sarcophagi, Greek coins, funeral ornaments, and crystal vases." Says Dr. Porter, "Heaps of hewn stones, and quantities of marble tesserae lay in my path, while broken mounds of rubbish were seen to the right and left,—here crowning a cliff, there washed by the waves." As we are rowed to the shore, we note that down through the clear waters we can distinctly perceive the remains of the ancient sea wall that bravely bade defiance to the billows of the great sea, in the days when the merchant princes of Tyre commanded the commerce of the world ; and when Hiram, the sea-king of the East, made a treaty with mighty Solomon, and sent him cedars from the groves on his upland provinces, and men to hew and polish the stones of that temple which struck so much wonder into the soul of Sheba's queen. Glancing around us, we see some fishermen pursuing their calling ; in their nets spread on the surf-beaten relics of the ancient towers we recognize the literal fulfilment of the old prediction. Slow pacing over the shore, where the shells of the purpura, or murex, a species of univalve whence the famous Tyrian dye was once extracted, are thickly scattered, we enter the city, and find its wretched

population of about 3,000 souls dwelling in poor hovels forming narrow and dirty streets among the ruins of what was once proud old Tyre. It must have been a city of columns and temples *par excellence*. The whole of the north end appears to have been one vast colonnade. Some fifteen feet beneath the miserable roads along which we pick our way among the *backshish*-seeking crowd, some excavators found a beautiful marble pavement, and laid bare the foundations of many buildings, and numerous works of art, as exquisite statues, and the like. Thus we walk on wonderingly over wrecks of ancient splendour that astonished and delighted even the well-travelled "Father of History," four centuries before the birth of Christ.\*

Here our wanderings among the archæological wonders of the Holy Land must end. We once more enter our vessel, the sailors of which seem anxious to quit the deserted roadstead where once the masts of the mightiest navy in the world lined the shore like a forest. We sit at the stem of the ship, and watch the low time-worn ruins sink into the waves reddened over by the setting sun.

"The archæology of the Bible is both more difficult and more interesting than that of the Greeks

\* Dr. Thomson.

and Romans, and its interest is commensurate with its importance. To reproduce in living pictures the bygone life of other ages, must always be a worthy task for the thoughtful student ; and lessons of the utmost importance will arise from the endeavour to resuscitate an extinct civilization. But when such a study is pursued in order to understand the character and institutions of that peculiar nation to which was entrusted the propagation of a revealed religion, it becomes worthy of the highest intellect ; without it no true conception can be formed of the views and circumstances which lent their chief force and value to many of the profoundest utterances of inspired philosophy during a period of fifteen centuries ; and the neglect with which it was long treated gave rise to many unnecessary difficulties and unworthy sneers. Had the peculiarities of Jewish civilization been thoroughly understood, half of the innuendoes which delighted the admirers of Bayle and Volney would only have raised a smile."\* At length, the present seems to be atoning for the supineness and, perhaps, the timidity of the past. Assured that the truth cannot suffer from the most crucial test ; and believing that the Bible contains the truth that saves surrounded by the facts of history and

\* Rev. W. F. Farrar.



of social and of scientific life, as concrete forms were given to those truths in the land of patriarchs and prophets, of Hebrew poets and Christian apostles ; such men as Robinson, and Thomson, and Stanley, and Tristram, and Kitto, and Porter, and a host of others, equally known to fame, have gone forth with measuring line and pickaxe ; with theodolite and quadrant, to tap the rocks, and bore the earth, and analyse the waters, and measure the height of the mountains, and sound the depth of the lakes and rivers of the East. From Dan to Beersheba they have surveyed the land more scientifically and accurately, and with far less fear than the spies of old. And if they have not brought us back a "cluster" from the vineyards of Eshcol, they have returned with what is far better for us, even the rich ripe fruit of varied knowledge and inductive observation, wherewith the Bible student and the Christian teacher may more vigorously enforce and livingly illustrate the heavenly truths he advances ; and pointing to the dismantled towers and cities of Palestine, whose ruin was the consummation of the moral degradation of their builders, may "assert eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to man."

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